

WILHELM MEISTER'S

APPRENTICESHIP.

A NOVEL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF

GOETHE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE spring had commenced in all its brilliancy ; a storm, that had been lowering all day, went fiercely down upon the hills ; the rain drew back into the country ; the sun came forth in all his splendour, and upon the dark vapour rose the lordly rainbow. Wilhelm was riding towards it : the sight made him sad. “ Ah ! ” said he within himself, “ do the fairest hues of life appear then only on a ground of black ? And must drops fall, if we are to be charmed ? A bright day is like a dim one, if we look at it unmoved : and what can move us but some silent hope that the inborn inclination of our spirits shall not always be without an object ? The recital of a noble action moves us ; the sight of every thing harmonious moves us : we feel then as if we were not altogether in a foreign land ; we fancy we are nearer to the home, towards which our best and inmost wishes are unweariedly endeavouring.”

Meanwhile a pedestrian overtook him, and walking with a stout step by the side of the horse, began to keep him company. After a few common words, he looked at the rider and said : " If I am not mistaken, I must have already seen you somewhere."

" I too remember you," said Wilhelm : " had we not some time ago a pleasant sail together?" " Right !" replied the other.

Wilhelm looked at him more narrowly ; then after a pause observed : " I do not know what alteration has occurred in you ; last time we met, I took you for a Lutheran clergyman, you now seem rather like a Catholic one."

" To-day at least you are not wrong," replied the other, taking off his hat and showing him the tonsure. " Where is your company gone ? Did you stay long with them ?"

" Longer than was good : on looking back upon the period which I passed in their society, it seems as if I looked into an endless void ; nothing of it has remained with me."

" Here you are mistaken," said the stranger ; " every thing that happens to us leaves some trace behind it, every thing contributes imperceptibly to form us. Yet often it is dangerous to take a strict account of it. For either we grow proud and negligent, or downcast and dispirited ; and both are equally injurious in their consequences. The surest plan is always just to do the nearest task

that lies before us ; and this in the present case," he added with a smile, " is to hasten to our quarters."

Wilhelm asked how far Lothario's house was distant : the stranger answered that it lay behind the hill. " Perhaps I shall meet you there," continued he ; " I have but a small affair to manage in the neighbourhood. Farewell till then !" And with this, he struck into a steep path, that seemed to lead more speedily across the hill.

" Yes, the man is right !" said Wilhelm to himself as he proceeded ; " we should think of what is nearest ; and for me at present there is nothing nearer than the mournful errand I have come to do. Let me see whether I can still repeat the speech, which is to put that cruel man to shame."

He then began reciting to himself this piece of oratory : not a syllable was wanting ; and the more his recollection served him, the higher grew his passion and his courage. Aurelia's sorrows and her death were vividly present to his soul.

" Spirit of my friend !" exclaimed he, " hover round me ; and if thou canst, give some sign to me that thou art softened, art appeased !"

Amid such words and meditations, he had reached the summit of the hill ; and near the foot of its declivity, he now beheld a curious building, which at once he took to be Lothario's dwelling. An old

irregular castle, with several turrets and peaked roofs, appeared to have been the primitive erection ; but the new additions to it, placed near the main structure, looked still more irregular. A part of them stood close upon the main edifice ; others, at some distance, were combined with it by galleries and covered passages. All external symmetry, every shade of architectural beauty, appeared to have been sacrificed to the convenience of the interior. No trace of wall or trench was to be seen ; none of avenues or artificial gardens. A fruit and pot-herb garden reached to the very buildings ; and little patches of a like sort shewed themselves even in the intermediate spaces. A cheerful village lay at no great distance : the fields and gardens everywhere appeared in the highest state of culture.

Sunk in his own impassioned feelings, Wilhelm rode along, not thinking much of what he saw : he put up his horse at an inn, and not without emotion, hastened to the Castle.

An old serving-man received him at the door ; and signified, with much politeness, that to-day it would be difficult to get admission to his Lordship ; who was occupied in writing letters, and already had refused to see some people that had business with him. Our friend grew more importunate ; the old man was at last obliged to yield and to announce him. He returned and conducted Wilhelm to a spacious ancient hall ; desiring him to

be so good as wait, since perhaps it might be some time ere his Lordship could appear. Our friend walked up and down unrestfully, casting now and then a look upon the knights and dames, whose ancient figures hung around upon the walls. He repeated the beginning of his speech ; it seemed to him, in presence of these ruffs and coats of mail, to answer even better than before. Every time aught stirred, he put himself in proper posture to receive his man with dignity, meaning first to hand the letter to him, then assail him with the weapons of reproach.

More than once deceived, he was now beginning to be really vexed and out of tune, when at last a handsome man, in boots and a light surtout, stepped in from a side-door. "What good news have you for me?" said he to Wilhelm, with a friendly voice ; "Pardon me, that I have made you wait."

So speaking, he kept folding a letter, which he held in his hand. Wilhelm, not without embarrassment, delivered him Aurelia's paper, and replied : "I bring you the last words of a friend, which you will not read without emotion."

Lothario took it, and returned to his chamber with it ; where, as Wilhelm through the open door could very easily observe, he backed and sealed some letters, ere he broke Aurelia's up. He appeared to have perused it once or twice ; and Wilhelm, though his feelings signified that the pathetic

speech would sort but ill with such a cool reception, girded up his mind, went forward to the threshold, and was just about beginning his address, when a tapestry door of the cabinet opened, and the clergyman came in.

“ I have got the strangest message you can think of,” cried Lothario to him. “ Pardon me,” continued he, addressing Wilhelm, “ if I am not in a mood for speaking farther with you at this moment. You remain with us to-night : you, Abbé, see the stranger properly attended to.”

With these words, he made his guest a bow : the clergyman took Wilhelm by the hand, who followed, not without reluctance.

They walked along some curious passages, in silence, and reached at last a very pretty chamber. The Abbé led him in ; then left him, making no excuses. Ere long, an active boy appeared : he introduced himself as Wilhelm’s valet ; and brought up his supper. In waiting he had much to say about the order of the house, about their breakfasting and dining, labours and amusements, interspersing many things in commendation of Lothario.

Pleasant as the boy was, Wilhelm tried as soon as possible to get him sent away. He wished to be alone ; for he felt exceedingly oppressed and straitened in his new position. He reproached himself with having executed his intentions so imperfectly, with having done his errand only half.

One moment, he proposed to overtake next morning what to-night he had neglected; the next, he saw that by Lothario's presence he would be attuned to quite a different set of feelings. The house, too, where he was, seemed very strange to him: he could not be at home in his condition. Intending to undress, he loosed his travelling bag: with his night-clothes, he took out the Spirit's veil, which Mignon had packed up along with them. The sight of it increased the sadness of his humour. "Fly! youth, fly!" cried he: "What means this mystic word? What am I to fly, or whither? It were better had the Spirit called to me: Return to thyself!" He cast his eyes upon some English copperplates, hung round the room in frames; most part of them he looked at with indifference: at last he met with one of them, in which a ship was represented sinking in a tempest; a father with his lovely daughters was awaiting death from the intrusive billows. One of the maidens had a kind of likeness with the Amazon: an indescribable compassion seized our friend; he felt an irresistible necessity to vent his feelings; tears filled his eyes, he wept, and did not recover his composure, till slumber overpowered him.

Strange dreams arose upon him towards morning. He was in a garden, which in boyhood he had often visited; he looked with pleasure at the

well-known alleys, hedges, flower-beds : Mariana met him, he spoke to her with love and tenderness, recollecting nought of any bygone grievance. Ere long his father joined them, in his week-day dress ; with a look of frankness, that was rare in him, he bade his son fetch two seats from the garden-house ; then took Mariana by the hand, and led her to a grove.

Wilhelm hastened to the garden-house, but found it altogether empty ; only at a window in the farther side, he saw Aurelia standing. He went forward and addressed her, but she turned not round ; and though he placed himself beside her, he could never see her face. He looked out from the window ; in an unknown garden, there were several people, some of whom he recognised. Frau Melina, seated underneath a tree, was playing with a rose, which she had in her hand ; Laertes stood beside her, counting money from the one hand to the other. Mignon and Felix were lying on the grass ; the former on her back, the latter on his face. Philina came and clapped her hands above the children ; Mignon lay unmoved ; Felix started up and fled. At first he laughed while running, as Philina followed : but he screamed in terror, when he saw the Harper coming after him with large, slow steps. Felix ran directly to a pond ; Wilhelm hastened after him : too late ; the child was lying in the water ! Wilhelm stood

as rooted to the spot. The fair Amazon appeared upon the other side of the pond ; she stretched her right hand towards the child, and walked along the shore. The child came through the water by the course her finger pointed to ; he followed her as she went round ; at last she reached her hand to him, and pulled him out. Wilhelm had come nearer : the child was all in flames ; fiery drops were falling from his body. Wilhelm's agony was greater than before ; but instantly the Amazon took a white veil from her head, and covered up the child with it. The fire was quenched at once. But when she lifted up the veil, two boys sprang out from under it, and frolicksomely sported to and fro ; while Wilhelm and the Amazon proceeded hand in hand across the garden ; and noticed in the distance Mariana and his father walking in an alley, which was formed of lofty trees, and seemed to go quite round the garden. He turned his steps to them, and with his beautiful attendant was moving through the garden, when at once the fair-haired Friedrich came across their path, and kept them back with laughter and a thousand tricks. Still, however, they insisted on proceeding ; and Friedrich hastened off, running towards Mariana and the father. These seemed to fly before him ; he pursued the faster ; till Wilhelm saw them hovering down the alley almost as on wings. Nature and inclination called on him to go and help

them ; but the hand of the Amazon detained him. How gladly did he let himself be held ! With this mingled feeling he awoke ; and found his chamber shining with the morning beams.

CHAPTER II.

Our friend was called to breakfast by the boy : he found the Abbé waiting in the hall ; Lothario, it was said, had ridden out. The Abbé was not very talkative, but rather had a thoughtful look : he asked about Aurelia's death, and listened to our friend's recital of it, with apparent sympathy. " Ah !" cried he, " the man that can discern with lively accuracy what endless operations art and nature must have joined in, ere a cultivated human being can be formed ; the man that himself as much as possible takes interest in the culture of his fellow-men, is ready to despair when he beholds how lightly mortals oft destroy themselves, oft blamelessly or blameably expose themselves to be destroyed. When I think of these things, life itself appears to me a gift of such uncertainty, that I could praise the man who does not value it beyond its worth."

Scarcely had he spoken, when the door flew violently up ; a young lady came rushing in ; she pushed away the old servant that attempted to restrain her. She made right to the Abbé, and

seized him by the arm ; her tears and sobs would hardly let her speak these words : “ Where is he ? Where have you put him ? ’Tis a frightful treachery ! Confess it now ! I know what you are doing : I will after him ; will know where you have sent him ! ”

“ Be calm, my child,” replied the Abbé with assumed composure ; “ come with me to your room ; you shall know it all ; only you must have the strength to listen, if you ask me to relate.” He offered her his hand, as if he meant to lead her out. “ I will not return to my room,” cried she : “ I hate the walls where you have kept me prisoner so long. I know it all already : the Colonel has challenged him ; he is gone to meet his enemy ; perhaps this very moment he is.—Once or twice I thought I heard the sound of shots ! I tell you, order out a coach, and come along with me, or I will fill the house and all the village with my screaming.”

Weeping bitterly, she hastened to the window ; the Abbé held her back, and sought in vain to sooth her.

They heard a sound of wheels : she threw the window up, exclaiming : “ He is dead ! They are carrying his body.” “ He is coming out,” replied the Abbé : “ you perceive he lives.” “ He is wounded,” said she wildly, “ else he would have come on horseback. They are holding him ! The wound is dangerous ! ” She ran to the door and

down the stair : the Abbé hastened after her ; and Wilhelm following, observed the fair one meet her lover, who had now dismounted.

Lothario leaned on his attendant, whom Wilhelm knew at once to be his ancient patron Jarno. The wounded man spoke very tenderly and kindly to the tearful damsel ; he rested on her shoulder, and came slowly up the stair ; saluted Wilhelm as he passed, and was conducted to his cabinet.

Jarno soon returned, and going up to Wilhelm, “ It appears,” said he, “ you are predestined everywhere to find a theatre and actors. We have here commenced a play that is not altogether pleasant.”

“ I rejoice to find you,” answered Wilhelm, “ in so strange an hour : I am astonished, frightened ; and your presence is already quieting my mind. Tell me, is there danger ? Is the Baron badly wounded ?” “ I imagine not,” said Jarno.

It was not long till the young surgeon entered from the cabinet. “ Now what say you ?” cried Jarno to him. “ That it is a dangerous piece of work,” replied the other, putting several instruments into his leathern pouch. Wilhelm looked upon the band, which was hanging from the pouch ; he fancied that he knew it. Bright, contrary colours, a curious pattern, gold and silver wrought in singular figures marked this band from all the bands on earth. Wilhelm was convinced that he beheld the very pouch of the ancient surgeon, who

had dressed his wounds in the green of the forest ; and the hope, so long deferred, of again finding traces of the lovely Amazon, struck like a flame through all his soul.

“ Where did you get that pouch ? ” cried he. “ To whom did it belong before you ? I beg of you, to tell me. ” “ I bought it at an auction, ” said the other : “ what is it to me, whom it belonged to ? ” So speaking, he went out, and Jarno said : “ If but one word of truth would issue from the Doctor’s mouth ! ” “ Then he did not buy the pouch ? ” said Wilhelm. “ Just as little as Lothario is in danger, ” said the other.

Wilhelm stood immersed in many contemplations ; Jarno asked how he had fared of late. Wilhelm sketched an outline of his history ; and when at last he came to speak about Aurelia’s death and his message to the place, his auditor exclaimed : “ Well ! it is strange, most strange ! ”

The Abbé entered from Lothario’s chamber ; beckoned Jarno to go in instead of him ; and said to Wilhelm : “ The Baron bids me ask you to remain with us a day or two, to share his hospitality, and in the present circumstances to contribute to his solacement. If you need to give any notice to your people, your letter shall be instantly despatched. Meanwhile, to make you understand this curious incident, of which you have been witness, I must tell you something which indeed is not a secret. The Baron had a small adventure with

a lady, which excited more than usual attention, the lady having taken him from a rival, and wishing to enjoy her victory too ostentatiously. Ere long unhappily he ceased to find the same delight in her society; which he of course forsook: but being of a violent temper, she could not bear her fate with equanimity. Meeting at a ball, they had an open quarrel: she thought herself irreparably injured; and wished to be revenged. No knight stepped forth to battle for her; till her husband, whom for years she had not lived with, heard of the affair and took it up. He challenged the Baron, and to-day has wounded him: yet, as I hear, the gallant Colonel has himself come off still worse."

From this hour, our friend was treated in the house as if he had belonged to it.

CHAPTER III.

By times they had read a little to the patient; Wilhelm joyfully performed this service. Lydia stirred not from Lothario's bed; her care for him absorbed her whole attention. But to-day the wounded man himself seemed occupied sufficiently: he bade them lay aside their book. "To-day," said he, "I feel through all my heart how foolishly we let our time pass on. How many things have I proposed to do, how many have I planned; yet how we loiter in our noblest purposes! I have just perused the scheme of the changes which I mean to make in my estates: and it is chiefly, I may say, on their account that I rejoice at the bullet's not having gone a deadlier road."

Lydia looked at him with tenderness, with tears in her eyes; as if to ask if *she*, if his friends could not pretend to any interest in his wish to live. Jarno answered: "Changes, such as you project, require to be considered well on every side, before they are resolved on."

"Long considerations," said Lothario, "are commonly a proof that we have not the point

to be determined clearly in our eye: precipitate proceedings that we do not know it. I see distinctly that in managing my property, there are several particulars, in which the services of my dependants cannot be remitted; certain rights which I must rigidly insist on: but I also see that there are other articles, advantageous to me, but by no means indispensable, which might admit of relaxation. Do I not profit by my lands far better than my father did? Is not my income still increasing? And shall I alone enjoy this growing benefit? Shall not those who labour with and for me have, in their degree, some share of the advantage, which expanding knowledge, which a period of improvement are procuring for us?"

" 'Tis human nature!" Jarno cried: " I do not blame myself when I detect this selfish quality among the rest. Every man desires to gather all things round him, to make and manage them according to his pleasure: the money, which himself does not expend, he seldom reckons well expended."

" Certainly," observed Lothario, " much of the capital might be abated, if we consumed the interest less capriciously."

" The only thing which I shall mention," said the other, " the only reason I can urge against your now proceeding with those alterations, which, for a time at least, must cause you loss, is, that you yourself are still in debt, and that the payment

presses hard on you. My advice is, therefore, to postpone your plan till you are altogether free."

"And in the meanwhile leave it at the mercy of a bullet or a tile to annihilate the whole result of my existence and activity! O my friend! It is ever thus; it is ever the besetting fault of cultivated men, that they wish to spend their whole resources upon some idea, scarcely any part of them on tangible existing objects. Why was it that I contracted debts, that I quarrelled with my uncle, that I left my sisters to themselves so long? Purely for the sake of an idea. In America, I thought I might accomplish something; over seas, I thought my presence useful and essential: if any task was not begirt with dangers, I considered it as trivial, as unworthy of me. How differently do matters now appear! How precious, how important seems the duty which is nearest me, whatever it may be!"

"I recollect the letter which you sent me from the Western world," said Jarno: "It contained the words: 'I will return, and in my house, amid my fields, among my people, I will say: *Here or nowhere is America!*'"

"Yes, my friend! and I am still repeating it, and still repining at myself that I am not so busy here as I was there. For certain equable, continuous modes of life, there is nothing more than judgment necessary, and we study to attain no-

thing more ; so that we become unable to discern what extraordinary services each vulgar day requires of us ; or if we do discern them, we can find abundance of excuses for not doing them. A judicious man is valuable to himself ; but of little value for the general whole."

" Let us not," said Jarno, " tread too sharply upon judgment : let us grant that whenever extraordinary things are done they generally are foolish."

" Yes ! and just because they are not done according to the proper plan. My brother-in-law, you see, is giving up his fortune, in so far as this is in his power, to the community of Herrnhuth : he reckons that by doing so, he is advancing the salvation of his soul. Had he sacrificed a slender portion of his revenue, he might have rendered many people happy, might have made for them and for himself a heaven upon earth. Our sacrifices are but rarely of an active kind : we, as it were, abandon what we give away. It is not from resolution but despair, that we renounce our property. To-day, I will confess, the image of the Count is hovering constantly before my eyes ; I have firmly resolved on doing from conviction, what a crazy fear is forcing upon him. I will not wait for being cured. Here are the papers : they require only to be properly drawn out. Take the lawyer with you ; our guest will likewise help you : what I want you know as well

as I; recovering or dying I will stand by it, and say: *Here or nowhere is Herrnhuth!*"

When he mentioned dying Lydia sank before his bed; she hung upon his arm, and wept bitterly. The surgeon entered; Jarno gave our friend the papers, and made Lydia leave the room.

"For Heaven's sake! what is this about the Count?" cried Wilhelm, when they reached the hall and were alone: "What Count is it that means to join the Herrnhuthers?"

"One whom you know very well," said Jarno. "You yourself are the ghost that have chased the unhappy wiseacre into piety; you are the villain who have brought his pretty wife to such a state, that she inclines accompanying him."

"And she is Lothario's sister?" cried our friend.

"No other!"—"And Lothario knows—?"

"The whole."

"O let me fly!" cried Wilhelm: "How shall I appear before him? What can he say to me?"

"That no man should cast a stone at his brother; that when one composes long speeches, with a view to shame his neighbours, he should speak them to a looking-glass."

"Do you know that also?"

"And many things beside," said Jarno with a smile. "But in the present case," continued he, "you shall not get away from me so easily as you did last time. You need not now be apprehensive

of my bounty-money : I have ceased to be a soldier ; when I was one, you might have thought more charitably of me. Since you saw me, many things have altered. My Prince, my only friend and benefactor being dead, I have now withdrawn from busy life and its concerns. I used to have a pleasure in advancing what was reasonable ; when I met with any despicable thing, I hesitated not to call it so : and men had never done with talking of my restless head and wicked tongue. The herd of people dread sound understanding more than any thing ; they ought to dread stupidity, if they had any notion what was really dreadful. Understanding is unpleasant, they must have it pushed aside ; stupidity is but pernicious, they can let it stay. Well, be it so ! I need to live ; I will by and by communicate my plans to you ; if you incline, you shall partake in them. But tell me first how things have gone with you. I see, I feel that you are changed. How is it with your ancient maggot of producing something beautiful and good in the society of gypsies ?”

“ Do not speak of it !” cried Wilhelm : “ I have been already punished for it. People talk about the stage ; but none, that has not been upon it personally, can form the smallest notion of it. How utterly these men are unacquainted with themselves, how thoughtlessly they carry on their trade, how boundless their pretensions are, no mortal can conceive. Each not only would be first,

but sole ; each wishes to exclude the rest, and does not see that even with them, he can scarce accomplish any thing. Each thinks himself a man of marvellous originality ; yet with a ravening appetite for novelty, he cannot walk a footstep from the beaten track. How vehemently they counterwork each other ! It is only the most pitiful self-love, the narrowest views of interest, that unite them. Of reciprocal accommodation they have no idea : backbiting and hidden spitefulness maintain a constant jealousy among them. In their lives they are either rakes or simpletons. Each claims the loftiest respect, each writhes beneath the slightest blame. ‘ All this he knew already,’ he will tell you ! Why then did he not do it ? Ever needy, ever unconfiding, they seem as if their greatest fear were reason and good taste, their highest care were to secure the majesty of their self-will.”

Wilhelm drew his breath, intending to proceed with his eulogium, when an immoderate laugh from Jarno interrupted him. “ ‘ Poor actors !’ ” cried he ; threw himself into a chair and laughed away : “ ‘ Poor dear actors ! Do you know, my friend,’ ” continued he, recovering from his fit, “ that you have been describing not the playhouse, but the world ; that out of all ranks, I could find you characters and doings in abundance, which would suit your cruel pencil ? Pardon me, it

makes me laugh again, that you should think these amiable qualities existed on the boards alone."

Wilhelm checked his feelings: Jarno's extravagant, untimely laughter had in truth offended him. "It is scarcely hiding your misanthropy," said he, "when you maintain that faults like these are universal."

"And it shows your unacquaintance with the world, when you impute them to the theatre in such a heinous light. I pardon in the player every fault that springs from self-deception and the wish to please. If he seem not something to himself and others, he is nothing. To seem is his vocation: he must prize his momentary approbation highly, for he gets no other recompense: he must try to glitter, he is there to do so."

"You will give me leave at least to smile, on my side," answered Wilhelm. "I should never have believed that you could be so merciful, so tolerant."

"I swear to you that I am serious, fully and deliberately serious. All faults of the man I can pardon in the player; no fault of the player can I pardon in the man. Do not set me upon chanting my lament about the latter: it might have a sharper sound than yours."

The surgeon entered from the cabinet; and to the question how his patient was, he answered with a lively air of complaisance: "Extremely

well indeed ; I hope soon to see him quite recovered." He hastened through the hall, not waiting Wilhelm's speech, who was preparing to inquire again with greater importunity about the leathern case. His anxiety to gain some tidings of his Amazon inspired him with confidence in Jarno : he disclosed his case to him, and begged his help. " You that know so many things," said he, " can you not discover this ?"

Jarno reflected for a moment, then turning to his friend : " Be calm," said he, " give no one any hint of it : we shall come upon the fair one's footsteps, never fear. At present I am anxious only for Lothario : the case is dangerous ; the kindness and comfortable talking of the Doctor tells me so. We should be quit of Lydia ; for here she does no good : but how to set about the task, I know not. To-night I am looking for our old Physician ; we shall then take farther counsel."

CHAPTER IV.

THE Physician came : it was the good, old, little doctor, whom we know already, and to whom we were obliged for the communication of the pious manuscript. First of all, he visited the wounded man ; with whose condition he appeared to be by no means satisfied. He had next a long interview with Jarno : but they made no allusion to the subject of it when they came to supper.

Wilhelm saluted him in the kindest manner, and inquired about the Harper. " We have still hopes of bringing round the hapless creature," answered the Physician. " He formed a dreary item in your limited and singular way of life," said Jarno. " How has it fared with him ? Tell me."

Having satisfied the curiosity of Jarno, the Physician thus proceeded : " I have never seen another man so strangely circumstanced. For many years, he has not felt the smallest interest in any thing without him, scarcely paid the smallest notice to it : wrapped up in himself, he has looked at nothing but his own hollow empty Me, which seemed to him like an immeasurable abyss. It was really touching, when he spoke to us of this mournful

state. ‘Before me,’ cried he, ‘I see nothing; behind me nothing but an endless night, in which I live in the most horrid solitude. There is no feeling in me, but the feeling of my guilt: and this appears but like a dim formless spirit, far before me. Yet here there is no height, no depth, no forwards, no backwards; no word can express this never-changing state. Often in the agony of this sameness, I exclaim with violence: Forever! Forever! and this dark incomprehensible word is clear and plain to the gloom of my condition. No ray of a Divinity illuminates this night; I shed all my tears by myself and for myself. Nothing is more horrible to me than friendship and love; for they alone excite in me the wish that the Apparitions which surround me might be real. But these two Spirits also have arisen from the abyss to plague me, and at length to tear from me the precious consciousness of my existence, unearthly though it be.’

“You should hear him speak,” continued the Physician;” when in hours of confidence he thus alleviates his heart. I have listened to him often with the deepest feelings. When pressed by any thing, and as it were compelled for an instant to confess that a space of time has passed, he looks astounded, then again refers the alteration to the things about him, considering it as an appearance of appearances, and so rejecting the idea of progress in duration. One night, he sung a song

about his gray hairs : we all sat around him weeping."

" O get it for me !" cried our friend.

" But have you not discovered any trace of what he calls his crime ?" inquired Jarno : " nor found out the reason of his wearing such a singular garb ; of his conduct at the burning of the house ; of his rage against the child ?"

" It is only by conjectures that we can approximate to any knowledge of his fate : to question him directly, contradicts our principle. Observing easily that he was of the Catholic religion, we thought that probably confession might afford him some assuagement : but he shrinks away, with the strangest gestures, every time we try to introduce the priest to him. However, not to leave your curiosity respecting him entirely unsatisfied, I may communicate our suppositions on the subject. In his youth, we think, he must have been a clergyman : hence probably his wish to keep his beard and long cloak. The joys of love appear, for many years, to have remained unknown to him. Late in life, as we conceive, some aberration with a lady very nearly related to him ; then her death, the consequence of an unlucky creature's birth, have altogether crazed his brain.

" His chief delusion is a fancy that he brings misfortune every where along with him ; and that death, to be unwittingly occasioned by a boy, is constantly impending over him. At first he was

afraid of Mignon, not knowing that she was a girl; then Felix frightened him; and as with all his misery, he has a boundless love of life, this may perhaps have been the origin of his aversion to the child."

"What hopes have you of his recovery?" inquired our friend.

"It advances slowly," answered the Physician; yet it does advance. He continues his appointed occupations: we have now accustomed him to read the newspapers; he always looks for them with eagerness."

"I am curious about his songs," said Jarno.

"Of these I can engage to get you several," replied the Doctor. "Our parson's eldest son, who frequently writes down his father's sermons, has, unnoticed by the Harper, marked on paper many stanzas of his singing; out of which some songs have gradually been pieced together."

Next morning Jarno met our friend, and said to him: "We have to ask a kindness of you. Lydia must for some time be removed: her violent unreasonable love and passionateness hinders the recovery of the Baron. His wound requires rest and calmness, though with his healthy temperament it is not dangerous. You see how Lydia tortures him with her tempestuous anxieties, her ungovernable terrors, her never-drying tears; and beside.—Enough!" he added with a smile, after pausing for a moment, "Our doctor expressly re-

quires that she must leave us for a while. We have got her to believe that a lady, one of her most intimate friends, is at present in the neighbourhood, wishing and expecting instantly to see her. She has been prevailed upon to undertake a journey to our lawyer's, which is but two leagues off. This man is in the secret : he will wofully lament that Fräulein Theresa should have just set out : he will seem to think that she may still be overtaken. Lydia will hasten after her ; and if you prosper, will be led from place to place. At last, if she insist on turning back, you must not contradict her : but the night will help you ; the coachman is a cunning knave, and we shall speak with him before he goes. You are to travel with her in the coach, to talk to her, and manage the adventure."

" It is a strange and dubious commission that you give me," answered Wilhelm : " How painful is the sight of true love injured ! And am I to be the instrument of injuring it ? I have never cheated any person so ; for it has always seemed to me that if we once begin deceiving, with a view to good and useful purposes, we run the risk of carrying it to an excess."

" Yet you cannot manage children otherwise," said Jarno.

" With children it may do," said Wilhelm ; " for we love them tenderly, and take an open charge of them. But with our equals, in behalf of whom

our heart is not so sure to call upon us for forbearance, it might frequently be dangerous. Yet do not think," he added, after pausing for a moment, "that I purpose to decline the task on this account. Honouring your judgment as I do, feeling such attachment to your noble friend, such eagerness to forward his recovery, by whatever means, I willingly forget myself and my opinions. It is not enough that we can risk our life to serve a friend; in the hour of need, we should also yield him our convictions. Our dearest passions, our best wishes we are bound to sacrifice in helping him. I undertake the charge; though it is easy to foresee the pain which I shall have to suffer, from the tears, from the despair of Lydia."

"And for this, no small reward awaits you," answered Jarno: "Fräulein Theresa, whom you get acquainted with, is a lady such as you will rarely see. She puts many a man to shame: I may say she is a genuine Amazon, while others are but pretty counterfeits, that wander up and down the world, in that ambiguous dress."

Our friend was struck: he almost thought that in Theresa he would find his Amazon again; especially as Jarno, whom he importuned to tell him more, broke off, and went away abruptly.

The new, near hope of once more seeing that beloved and honoured being, awoke a thousand feelings in his heart. He now looked upon the task, which had been given him, as the intervention of a

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special Providence ; the thought that he was *mind-*ed treacherously to carry off a helpless girl from the object of her warmest and justest love, dwelt but a moment in his mind, as the shadow of a bird flits over the sunshiny earth.

The coach was at the door ; Lydia lingered for a moment, as she was about to mount. “ Salute your lord again for me,” said she to the old servant ; “ tell him, that I shall be home before night.” Tears were standing in her eyes, as she again looked back when the carriage started. She then turned round to Wilhelm ; made an effort to compose herself, and said : “ In Fräulein Theresa, you will find a very interesting person. I wonder what it is that brings her hither : for, you must know, Lotthario and she once loved each other passionately. In spite of the distance, he used frequently to visit her : I was staying with her then ; I thought they would have lived and died for one another. But all at once it went to wreck, no creature could discover why. He had seen me, and I must confess that I was envious of Theresa’s fortune ; that I scarcely hid my love from him ; that when he suddenly appeared to choose me in her stead, I could not but accept of him. She behaved to me beyond my wishes ; though it almost seemed that I had robbed her of this precious lover. But ah ! How many thousand tears and pains that love of his has cost me ! At first we used to meet by stealth at some appointed place ;

but I could not long endure that kind of life : in his presence only was I happy, wholly happy ! Far from him, my eyes were never dry, my pulse was never calm. Once he staid away for several days : I was altogether in despair ; I ordered out my carriage, and surprised him here. He received me tenderly ; and had not this unlucky quarrel happened, I should have led a heavenly life with him. But since the time when he began to be in danger and in pain, I shall not say what I have suffered : at this moment, I am bitterly reproaching myself, that I could leave him for a single day."

Wilhelm was proceeding to inquire about Theresa, when they reached the lawyer's house. This gentleman came forward to the coach, lamenting wofully that Fräulein Theresa was already gone. He invited them to breakfast ; signifying however that the lady might be overtaken in the nearest village. They determined upon following her : the coachman did not loiter ; they had soon passed several villages, and yet come up with nobody. Lydia now gave orders for returning ; the coachman drove along, as if he did not understand her. As she insisted with redoubled vehemence, Wilhelm called to him, and gave the promised token. The coachman answered, that it was not necessary to go back by the same road ; he knew a shorter, and at the same time greatly easier one. He now turned aside across a wood, and over large commons. At last, no object they could recognise ap-

pearing, he confessed that unfortunately he had lost his way, declaring at the same time that he would soon get right again, as he saw a little town before him. Night came on : the coachman managed so discreetly that he asked everywhere, and nowhere waited for an answer. He drove along all night : Lydia never closed an eye ; in the moonshine she was constantly detecting similarities, which as constantly turned out to be dissimilar. In the morning, things around seemed known to her, and but more strange on that account. The coach drew up before a neat little country house ; a young lady stepped out, and opened the carriage-door. Lydia looked at her with a stare of wonder ; looked round ; looked at her again ; and fainted in the arms of Wilhelm.

CHAPTER V.

WILHELM was conducted to a little upper-room : the house was new, as small nearly as it could be, and extremely orderly and clean. In Theresa, who had welcomed him and Lydia at the coach, he had not found his Amazon : she was another and an altogether different woman. Handsome, and but of middle stature, she moved about with great alertness ; and it seemed as if her clear blue open eyes let nothing that occurred escape them.

She entered Wilhelm's room, inquiring if he wanted any thing. " Pardon me," said she, " for having lodged you in a chamber, which the smell of paint still renders disagreeable : my little dwelling is but just made ready ; you are handselling this room, which is appointed for my guests. Would that you had come on some more pleasant errand ! Poor Lydia is like to be a dull companion ; in other points, also, you will have many things to pardon. My cook has run away from me, at this unseasonable time ; and a serving-man has bruised his hand. I might be forced to manage all myself ; and if it were so, we must just put up with

it. One is plagued with nobody so much as with one's servants: not one of them will serve you, scarcely even serve himself."

She said a good deal more on different matters: in general she seemed to like to speak. Wilhelm asked for Lydia; if he might not see her and endeavour to excuse himself.

"It will have no effect at present," said Theresa; "time excuses, as it comforts. Words in both cases are of little power. Lydia will not see you. 'Keep him from my sight,' she cried, when I was leaving her; 'I could almost despair of human nature. Such an honourable countenance, so frank a manner, and this secret guile!' Lothario she has quite forgiven: in a letter to the poor girl he declares: 'My friends persuaded me, my friends compelled me!' Among these she reckons you, and she condemns you with the rest."

"She does me too much honour in so blaming me," said Wilhelm: "I have no pretension to the friendship of that noble gentleman; on this occasion, I am but a guiltless instrument. I will not praise what I have done: it is enough that I could do it. It concerned the health, it concerned the life of a man, whom I value more than any one I ever knew before. O what a man is he, Fräulein; and what men are they that live about him! In their society I for the first time, I may well say, carried on a conversation; for the first time, was the inmost sense of my words returned to me, more

rich, more full, more comprehensive, from another's mouth : what I had been groping for was rendered clear to me ; what I had been thinking I was taught to see. Unfortunately this enjoyment was disturbed at first by numerous anxieties and whims, and then by this unpleasant task. I undertook it with submission ; for I reckoned it my duty, even though I sacrificed my feelings, to comply with the request of this gifted company of men."

While he spoke, Theresa had been looking at him with a very friendly air. " O how sweet is it, to hear one's own opinion uttered by a stranger tongue ! We are never properly ourselves until another thinks entirely as we do. My own opinion of Lothario is perfectly the same as yours : it is not every one that does him justice ; and therefore all that know him better are enthusiastic in esteem of him. The painful sentiment, that mingles with the memory of him in my heart, cannot hinder me from thinking of him daily." A sigh heaved her bosom as she spoke thus ; and a lovely tear glittered in her right eye. " Think not," continued she, " that I am so weak, so easy to be moved. It is but the eye that weeps. There was a little wart upon the under eyelid ; they have happily removed it ; but the eye has ever since been weak ; the smallest cause will bring a tear into it. Here sat the little wart : you cannot see a vestige of it now."

He saw no vestige ; but he saw into her eye : it

was clear as crystal ; he almost imagined he could see to the very bottom of her soul.

“ We have now,” said she, “ pronounced the watchword of our friendship : let us get entirely acquainted as speedily as possible. The history of every person paints his character. I will tell you what my life has been : do you too place a little trust in me ; and let us be united even when distance parts us. The world is waste and empty, when we figure only towns and hills and rivers in it : but to know of some one here and there, whom we accord with, who is living with us even in silence, makes this earthy ball a peopled garden.”

She hastened off ; engaging soon to take him out to walk. Her presence had affected him agreeably : he wished to be informed of her relation to Lothario. He was called ; she came to meet him from her room.

While they descended, necessarily one by one, the strait and even steepish stair, she said : “ All this might have been larger and grander had I chosen to accept the offers of your generous friend : but to continue worthy of him, I must study to retain the qualities, which gave me merit in his eyes.—Where is the steward ?” asked she, stepping from the bottom of the stair. “ You must not think,” continued she, “ that I am rich enough to need a steward : the few acres of my own little property I myself can manage well enough. The steward is my new neighbour’s, who has bought a

fine estate beside us, every point of which I am acquainted with. The good old gentleman is lying ill of gout ; his men are strangers here ; I willingly assist in settling them."

They took a walk through fields, meadows, and some orchards. In every thing Theresa could instruct the steward ; nothing so minute but she could give account of it : and Wilhelm had sufficient cause to wonder at her knowledge and correctness, as well as the dexterity with which in every case she could devise the necessary means. She loitered nowhere ; always hastened to the leading points ; and thus her task was quickly over. " Salute your master," said she, as she sent away the man ; " I mean to visit him as soon as possible, and wish him a complete recovery.— There now," she added with a smile, as soon as he was gone, " I might soon be rich : my good neighbour, I believe, would not be disinclined to offer me his hand."

" The old man with the gout ?" cried Wilhelm : " I know not how at your years you could bring yourself to make so desperate a determination." " Nor am I tempted to it !" said Theresa : " Every one that can administer what he possesses has enough, and to be wealthy is a burdensome affair, unless you understand it."

Wilhelm testified his admiration at her skill in husbandry concerns. " Decided inclination, early opportunity, external impulse, and continued oc-

cupation in a useful business," said she, "make many things, which were at first far harder, possible in life. When you have learned what causes stimulated me in this pursuit, you will cease to wonder at the talent that appears so strange to you."

On returning home, she sent him to her little garden. Here he scarce could turn himself, so narrow were the walks, so thickly was it sown and planted. On looking over to the court, he could not keep from smiling: the firewood was lying there, as accurately sawed, split, and piled, as if it had been part of the building, and had been intended to abide there constantly. The tubs and implements, all clean, were standing in their places: the house was painted white and red; it was really pleasant to behold. Whatever can be done by handicraft, that knows not beautiful proportions, but that labours for convenience, cheerfulness, and durability, appeared united on the spot. They served him up his dinner in his room: he had time enough for meditating. Especially it struck him, that he should have got acquainted with another person of so interesting a character, who had been so closely related to Lothario. "It is just," he said within himself, "that a man so exquisite, should attract around him gifted women. How far the influence of his manliness and dignity extends! Would that others did not come so wofully short, compared with him! Yes, confess thy fear. When thou meetest with

thy Amazon, this woman of women, in spite of all thy hopes and dreaming, thou wilt find her, in the end, to thy humiliation and thy shame—his bride.”

CHAPTER VI.

Our friend had passed a restless afternoon, not altogether without tedium ; when towards evening his door opened, and a handsome hunter boy stepped forward with a bow. " Shall we have a walk ?" said the youth ; and in the instant Wilhelm recognised Theresa by her lovely eyes.

" Pardon me this masquerade," said she ; " for now, alas ! it is nothing but a masquerade. Yet as I am going to tell you of the time when I enjoyed the world so much, I will recal those days, by every method, to my fancy. Come along ! Even the place, where we have rested so often from our hunts and promenades, shall help me ?

They went accordingly. On the way, Theresa said to her attendant : " It is not fair that I alone should speak : you already know enough of me, I nothing about you. Tell me in the meanwhile something of yourself, that I may gather courage to submit to you my history and situation." " Alas !" said Wilhelm, " I have nothing to relate but error on the back of error, deviation following deviation : and I know none from whom I

would more gladly hide my present and my past embarrassments than from yourself. Your look, the scene you move in, your whole temperament and manner, prove to me that you have reason to rejoice in your bygone life; that you have travelled by a fair, clear path, in constant progress; that you have lost no time, that you have nothing to reproach yourself withal."

Theresa answered with a smile: "Let us see if you will think so, after you have heard my history." They walked along: among some general remarks, Theresa asked him: "Are you free?" "I think I am," said he; "and yet I do not wish it." "Good!" said she: "that indicates a complicated story: you also will have something to relate."

Conversing thus, they ascended the height, and placed themselves beside a lofty oak, which spread its shade far out on every side. "Here," said she, "bencath this German tree, will I disclose to you the history of a German maiden: listen to me patiently.

"My father was a wealthy noble of this province; a cheerful, clear-sighted, active, able man; a tender father, an upright friend, an excellent economist. I knew but one fault in him: he was too compliant to a wife that did not know his worth. Alas! that I should have to say so of my mother! Her nature was the opposite of his. She was quick and changeful; destitute of inclination for her house, or me her only child; extravagant,

but beautiful, rich-minded, full of talent, the delight of a circle which she had collected round her. Her society in truth was never large ; nor did it long continue with her. It consisted principally of men ; for no woman could be comfortable near her, still less could *she* endure the merit or the praise of any woman. I was like my father, both in form and sentiments. As the duckling, with its first footsteps, seeks the water ; so, from my earliest youth, the kitchen, the store-room, the granaries, the fields, were my selected element. Cleanliness and order in the house, seemed, even while I was playing in it, to be my peculiar instinct, my peculiar object. This tendency gave pleasure to my father ; and he by degrees afforded the most suitable employment to my childish efforts. On the contrary, my mother did not like me, and she never hid it for a moment.

“ I waxed in stature : with my years, increased my turn for occupation and my father’s love to me. When we were by ourselves, when walking through the fields, when I was helping to examine his accounts, I could perceive what happiness he was enjoying. While gazing on his eyes, I felt as if I had been looking in upon myself : for it was in the eyes that I resembled him completely. But in the presence of my mother, he lost this liveliness of spirit, this expressiveness of aspect : he excused me mildly, when she blamed me unjustly and violently : he took my part,

not as if he would protect me, but as if he would extenuate the demerit of my good qualities. To none of her caprices did he set himself in opposition. She began to be immensely taken with a passion for the stage: a theatre was soon got up; of men of all shapes and ages, crowding to display themselves along with her upon her boards, she had abundance; of women, on the other hand, there often was a scarcity. Lydia, a pretty girl, who had been brought up with me, and who promised from the first to be extremely beautiful, was forced to undertake the secondary parts; the mothers and the aunts were represented by an ancient chambermaid; while the leading heroines, lovers, and shepherdesses of every kind, were seized on by my mother. I cannot tell you how ridiculous it seemed to me, to see the people, every one of whom I knew full well, standing on their scaffold, and pretending, after they had dressed themselves in other clothes, to pass for something else than what they were. In my eyes, they were never any thing but Lydia and my mother, this baron and that secretary, whether they appeared as counts and princes or as peasants: and I could not understand how they meant to make me think that they were sad or happy, that they were indifferent or in love, liberal or avaricious, when I well knew the contrary to be the case. Accordingly, I very seldom staid among the audience: I always snuffed their candles, that I

might not be entirely without employment; I prepared the supper; and next morning, ere they rose, I used to have their wardrobe all assorted, which commonly, the night before, they left in a chaotic state.

“To my mother this activity appeared quite proper: but her love I could not gain. She despised me; and I know for certain that she more than once exclaimed with bitterness: ‘If the mother could be as uncertain as the father, I should scarcely be prevailed upon to take this housemaid for my daughter!’ Such treatment, I confess, at length entirely estranged me from her: I viewed her conduct as the conduct of a person unconnected with me; and being used to watch our servants like a falcon, (for this, be it said in passing, forms the ground of all true housekeeping) the proceedings of my mother and her friends at the same time naturally forced themselves upon my observation. It was easy to perceive that she did not look on all the men alike: I gave sharper heed; and soon found out that Lydia was her confidant, and had herself on this occasion grown more narrowly acquainted with a passion, which from her earliest youth she had so often represented. I was aware of all their meetings: but I held my tongue; hinting nothing to my father, whom I was afraid of troubling. At last, however, I was forced to speak. Many of their enterprises could not be effected without

corrupting the servants. These now began to grow refractory ; they despised my father's regulations, disregarded my commands. The disorders, which arose from this, I could not tolerate ; I discovered all, complained of all to my father.

“ He listened to me calmly. ‘ Good girl !’ replied he with a smile ; ‘ I know it all : be quiet, bear it patiently ; for it is on thy account alone that I endure it.’

“ I was not quiet, I had not patience. I in secret blamed my father ; for I did not think that any reason should induce him to endure such things. I called for regularity from all the servants ; I was bent on driving matters to the uttermost extremity.

“ My mother had been rich before her marriage : yet she squandered more than she had right to ; and this, as I observed, occasioned many a conference between my parents. For a long time, the evil was not helped ; until at last the passions of my mother brought the business to a head.

“ Her first gallant became unfaithful in a glaring manner : the house, the neighbourhood, her whole condition grew offensive to her. She insisted on removing to a different estate ; there she was too solitary : she insisted on removing to the town ; there she felt herself eclipsed among the crowd. Of much that passed between my father and her I know nothing : however, he at last determined, under stipulations which I did not

learn, to consent that she should take a journey, which she had been meditating, to the south of France.

“ We were now free, we lived as if in heaven : I do believe, my father could not be a loser, even though her absence had been bought by a considerable sum. All our useless domestics were dismissed ; and fortune seemed to smile upon our undertakings : we had some extremely prosperous years ; all things succeeded to our wish. But alas ! this pleasing state was not of long continuance ; altogether unexpectedly my father had a shock of palsy ; it lamed his right side, and deprived him of the proper use of speech. We had to guess at every thing that he required ; for he never could pronounce the word that he intended. There were times when this was dreadfully afflicting to us : he would require expressly to be left alone with me ; with earnest gestures, he would signify that every one should go away ; and when we saw ourselves alone, he could not speak the word he meant. His impatience mounted to the highest pitch : his situation touched me to the inmost heart. Thus much seemed certain : he had something which he wished to tell me, which especially concerned my interest. What longing did I feel to know it ! At other times, I could discover all things in his eyes : but now it was in vain. Even his eyes no longer spoke. Only this was clear : he wanted nothing, he de-

sired nothing; he was striving to discover something to me; which unhappily I did not learn. His malady revisited him: he grew entirely inactive, incapable of motion, and a short time afterwards he died.

“ I know not how it had got rooted in my thoughts, that somewhere he had hid a treasure, which he wished at death to leave me rather than my mother: I searched about for traces of it while he lived, but I could meet with none; at his death a seal was put on every thing. I wrote to my mother, I offered to continue in the house and manage for her: she rejected this, and I was forced to leave the place. A mutual testament was now produced: it gave my mother the possession and the use of all; and I was left, at least throughout her life, dependent on her. It was now that I conceived I rightly understood my father's beckonings: I pitied him for having been so weak; he had let himself be forced to do unjustly to me even after he was dead. Certain of my friends maintained, that this was very little better than if he had disinherited me: they called upon me to attack the will by law; but this I never could resolve on doing. I revered my father's memory too highly: I trusted in destiny; I trusted in myself.

“ There was a lady in the neighbourhood possessed of large property, with whom I had always been on good terms: she received me gladly; I

engaged to superintend her household, and ere long the task grew very easy to me. She lived regularly, she loved order in every thing; and I faithfully assisted her in struggling with her steward and domestics. I am neither of a niggardly nor grudging temper; but we women are accustomed to insist, more earnestly than men, that nothing shall be wasted. Embezzlement of all sorts is intolerable to us: we require that each enjoy exactly in so far as right entitles him.

“ Here I was in my element once more; I mourned my father’s death in silence. My protectress was content with me: one small circumstance alone disturbed my peace. Lydia returned: my mother had been harsh enough to cast the poor girl off, after having altogether spoiled her. Lydia had learned with her mistress to consider passions as her occupation; she was wont to curb herself in nothing. On her unexpected re-appearance, the lady whom I lived with took her in; she wished to help me, but could train herself to nothing.

“ About this time, the relatives and future heirs of my protectress often visited the house, to recreate themselves with hunting. Lothario was frequently among them: it was not long till I had noticed, though without the smallest reference to myself, how far he was superior to the rest. He was courteous towards all; and Lydia seemed ere long to have attracted his attention to her.

Constantly engaged in something, I was seldom with the company: while he was there I did not talk so much as usual; for I will confess, that lively conversation from of old had been to me the finest seasoning of existence. With my father I was used to talk of every thing that happened. What you do not speak of, you will seldom think of accurately. There was none whom I had ever heard with greater pleasure than I heard Lothario, when he told us of his travels and campaigns. The world appeared to lie before him clear and open, as to me the district was in which I lived and managed. We were not entertained with marvellous personal adventures, the extravagant half-truths of a shallow traveller, who is always painting out himself, and not the country he has undertaken to describe. Lothario did not tell us his adventures; he led us to the place itself. I have seldom felt so pure a satisfaction.

“But still higher was my pleasure, when I heard him talk, one evening, about women. The subject happened to be introduced: some ladies of the neighbourhood had come to see us; and were speaking in the common style about the cultivation of the female mind. Our sex, they said, was used unjustly; every sort of higher education men insisted on retaining for themselves; they admitted us to no science, they required us either to be dolls or family drudges. To all this Lothario said not much: but when the party was

a little thinned, he gave us his opinion more explicitly. ‘It is very strange,’ cried he, ‘that men are blamed for their proceeding here: they have placed woman on the highest station she is capable of occupying. And where is there any station higher than the ordering of the house? While the husband has to vex himself with outward matters; while he has to gather wealth and to protect it; while perhaps he takes a share in the administration of the state, and there constantly depends on circumstances, ruling nothing, I may say, while he conceives that he is ruling much, compelled to be but politic where he would willingly be reasonable, to dissemble where he would be open, to be false where he would be upright; while thus, for the sake of an object which he never reaches, he must every moment sacrifice the first of objects, harmony with himself,—a reasonable housewife is actually governing in the interior of her family; has the comfort and activity of every person in it to provide for and make possible. What is the highest happiness of mortals, if not to execute what we consider right and good; to be really masters of the means conducive to our aims? And where should or can our first and nearest aims be but within the house? All those indispensable, and still to be renewed supplies, where do we expect, do we require to find them, if it is not in the place where we arise and where we go to sleep, where kitchen and cel-

lar, and every species of accommodation for ourselves and ours is to be always ready? What unvarying activity is needed to conduct this constantly recurring series in unbroken living order! How few are the men, to whom it is given to return regularly like a star, to command their day as they command their night; to form for themselves their household instruments, to sow and to reap, to gain and to expend, and to travel round their circle with perpetual success and peace and love! It is when a woman has attained this inward mastery, that she truly makes the husband, whom she loves, a master: her attention will acquire all sorts of knowledge for her; her activity will turn them all to profit. Thus is she dependent upon no one; and she procures her husband genuine independence, that which is interior and domestic: whatever he possesses he beholds secured; what he earns, well employed; and thus he can direct his mind to lofty objects, and if fortune favours, he may act in the state the same character which becomes his wife so well at home.'

"He then described to us the kind of wife he wished. I reddened; for he was describing me, as I looked and lived. I silently enjoyed my triumph; and the more as I perceived, from all the circumstances, that he had not meant me individually, that indeed he did not know me. I cannot recollect a more delightful feeling in my life than this, when a man whom I so highly va-

lued gave the preference, not to my person, but my inmost nature. What a recompense did I consider it ! What encouragement did it afford me !

“ When they were gone, my worthy benefactress with a smile observed to me : ‘ Pity that men often think and speak of what they will not suffer to be executed, else here would be a special match exactly suitable to my dear Theresa ! ’ I made sport of her remark ; and added that indeed men’s understandings gave their suffrages for household wives ; but that their hearts and their imaginations longed for other qualities ; and that we household people could not stand a rivalry with beautiful and lovely women. This was spoken for the ear of Lydia ; she did not hide from us that Lothario had made a deep impression on her heart ; and in reality, he seemed at each new visit to grow more and more attentive to her. She was poor, and not of rank ; she could not think of marriage ; but she was unable to resist the dear delight of charming and of being charmed. I had never loved, nor did I love at present : but though it was unspeakably agreeable to see in what light my turn of mind was viewed, how highly it was ranked by such a man, I will confess that still I was not altogether satisfied. I now desired that he should be acquainted with me, and should take a personal interest in me. This wish arose, without the smallest settled thought of any thing that could result from it.

“ The greatest service which I did my benefactress, was in bringing into order the extensive forests which belonged to her. In this precious property, whose value time and circumstances were continually increasing, matters still went on according to the old routine ; without regularity, without plan ; no end to theft and fraud. Many hills were standing bare ; an equal growth was nowhere to be found but in the oldest cuttings. I personally visited the whole of them, with an experienced forester. I got the woods correctly measured ; I set men to hew, to sow, to plant ; in a short time, all things were in progress. That I might mount more readily on horseback, and also walk on foot with less obstruction where I pleased, I had a suit of men’s-clothes made for me ; I was in many places, I was feared in all.

“ Hearing that our young friends with Lothario were purposing to have another hunt, it came into my head, for the first time, in my life, to make a figure ; or that I may not do myself injustice, to pass in the eyes of this noble gentleman for what I was. I put on my men’s-clothes, took my gun upon my shoulder, and went forward with our hunters, to await the party on our marches. They came ; Lothario did not know me : a nephew of the lady’s introduced me to him as a clever forester ; joked about my youth, and carried on his jesting in my praise, until at last Lothario recognised me. The nephew seconded my project, as if

we had concocted it together. He circumstantially and gratefully described what I had done for the estates of his aunt, and consequently for himself.

“ Lothario listened with attention ; he talked with me ; inquired concerning all particulars of the estates and district. I of course was glad at having such an opportunity of shewing him my knowledge : I stood my ordeal very well ; I submitted certain projects of improvement to him ; which he sanctioned, telling me of similar examples, and strengthening my arguments by the connexion which he gave them. My satisfaction grew more perfect every moment. Happily, however, I merely wished that he should be acquainted with me, not that he should love me. We came home ; and I observed more clearly than before, that the attention which he shewed to Lydia seemed expressive of a secret inclination. I had reached my object ; yet I was not quiet. From that day, he shewed a true respect for me, a fine trust in me : in company he usually spoke to me ; asked for my opinion, and appeared to be persuaded that, in household matters, nothing was unknown to me. His sympathy excited me extremely : even when the conversation was of general finance and political economy, he used to lead me to take part in it ; and in his absence, I endeavoured to acquire more knowledge of our province, nay of all the empire.

The task was easy for me : it was but repeating on the great scale what I knew so accurately on the small.

“ From this period he visited our house more frequently. We talked, I may say, of every thing : yet in some degree our conversation always in the end grew economical, if even but in a secondary sense. What immense effects a man, by the continuous application of his powers, his time, his money, even by means which seem but small, may bring about, was frequently and largely spoken of.

“ I did not withstand the tendency which drew me towards him : and alas ! I felt too soon how deep, how cordial, how pure and genuine was my love, as I believed it more and more apparent that Lydia not myself was the occasion of these visits. She at least was most entirely convinced of this : she made a confidant of me ; and by this I felt myself at least in some degree consoled. What she explained so much to her advantage, I reckoned nowise of importance ; there was not a trace of any serious lasting union being meditated ; but the more distinctly did I see the wish of the impassioned girl to be his at any price.

“ Thus did matters stand, when the lady of the house surprised me with an unexpected message. ‘ Lothario,’ said she, ‘ offers you his hand, and desires through life to have you ever at his side.’ She enlarged upon my qualities, and told me, what

I liked sufficiently to hear, that in me Lothario was persuaded he had found the person whom he had so long been seeking for.

“ The height of happiness was now attained for me : my hand was asked by a man, for whom I had the greatest value, beside whom, and along with whom, I might expect a full, expanded, free and profitable employment of my inborn tendency, my talent perfected by practice. The sum of my existence seemed augmented infinitely. I gave my consent ; he himself came, and spoke with me in private ; he held out his hand to me ; he looked into my eyes, he clasped me in his arms, and pressed a kiss upon my lips. It was the first and the last. He confided to me all his circumstances ; told me how much his American campaign had cost him, what debts he had accumulated on his property ; that, on this score he had in some measure quarrelled with his grand-uncle ; that the worthy gentleman intended to relieve him, though truly in his own peculiar way, being minded to provide him with a rich wife, whereas a man of sense would choose a household one at all events ; that however, by his sister’s influence, he hoped his noble relative would be persuaded. He set before me the condition of his fortune, his plans, his prospects, and requested my co-operation. Till his uncle should consent, our promise was to be a secret.

“ Scarcely was he gone, when Lydia asked me,

whether he had spoken aught of her. I answered no ; and tired her with a long detail of economical affairs. She was restless, out of humour ; and his conduct, when he came again, did not improve her situation.

“ But the sun I see is bending to the place of rest. Well for you, my friend ! You would otherwise have had to hear the story, which I like so much to tell, in all its most minute particulars. Let me hasten : we are coming to an epoch, over which it is not good to linger.

“ By Lothario I was made acquainted with his noble sister ; and she, at a convenient time, contrived to introduce me to the uncle. I gained the old man ; he consented to our wishes ; and I returned, with happy tidings, to my benefactress. The affair was now no secret in the house : Lydia heard of it ; she thought the thing impossible. When she could no longer doubt of it, she vanished all at once : we knew not whither she had gone.

“ Our marriage day was coming near : I had often asked him for his portrait ; once, as he was just about departing, I reminded him that he had promised it. ‘ You have never given me the case,’ said he, ‘ to which you wish to have it fitted.’ This was true : I had got a present from a female friend, on which I set no ordinary value. Her name worked from her own hair was fastened on the outer glass ; within, there was a vacant piece of

ivory, on which her portrait was to have been painted, when a sudden death snatched her from me. Lothario's love had cheered me at the moment when her death lay heavy on my spirits : and I wished to have the void, which she had left me in her present, filled by the picture of my friend.

“ I ran to my chamber ; fetched my jewel-box, and opened it in his presence. Scarcely had he looked into it, when he noticed a medallion with the portrait of a lady. He took it in his hand ; considered it attentively, and asked me hastily whose face it was. ‘ My mother’s,’ answered I. ‘ I could have sworn,’ said he, ‘ that it was the portrait of a Madame Saint Alban, whom I met some years ago in Switzerland.’ ‘ It is the same,’ replied I, smiling ; ‘ and so you have unwittingly become acquainted with your stepmother. Saint Alban is the name my mother has assumed for travelling with : she *passés* under it in France at present.’

“ ‘ I am the most miserable man alive !’ exclaimed he, as he threw the portrait back into the box, covered his eyes with his hand, and hurried from the room. He sprang on horseback ; I ran to the balcony, and called out after him : he turned ; waved his hand to me, went speedily away,—and I have never seen him more.”

The sun went down : Theresa gazed with unaverted looks upon the splendour ; and both her fine eyes filled with tears.

Theresa spoke not : she laid her hand upon her new friend's hands ; he kissed it with emotion ; she dried her tears and rose. " Let us return, and see that all is right," said she.

The conversation was not lively by the way. They entered the garden-door, and noticed Lydia sitting on a bench : she arose ; withdrew before them, and walked in. She had a paper in her hand ; two little girls were by her. " I see," observed Theresa, " she is still carrying her only comfort, Lothario's letter with her. He promises that she shall live with him again, so soon as he is well : he begs of her till then to stay in peace with me. On these words she hangs ; with these lines she solaces herself : but with his friends she is extremely angry."

Meanwhile the two children had approached. They curtsied to Theresa, and gave her an account of all that had occurred while she was absent. " You see here another part of my employment," said Theresa. " Lothario's sister and I have made a league : we educate some little ones in common : such as promise to be lively serviceable housewives I take charge of ; she of such as shew a finer and more quiet talent : it is right to provide for the happiness of future husbands, both in household and in intellectual matters. When you become acquainted with my noble friend, a new era in your life will open. Her beauty, her goodness, make her worthy of the reverence of the

world.” Wilhelm did not venture to confess, that unhappily the lovely Countess was already known to him; that his transient connexion with her would occasion him perpetual sorrow. He was well contented that Theresa let the conversation drop; that business called for her within. He was now alone: the intelligence which he had just received of the young and lovely Countess being driven to replace, by deeds of benevolence, her own lost comfort, made him very sad: he felt that with her it was but a need of self-oblivion, an attempt to supply, by the hopes of happiness to others, the want of a cheerful enjoyment of existence in herself. He thought Theresa happy, since even in that unexpected melancholy alteration, which had taken place in her prospects, there was no alteration needed in herself. “How fortunate beyond all others,” cried he, “is the man, who, in order to adjust himself to fate, is not required to cast away his whole preceding life!”

Theresa came into his room, and begged his pardon for disturbing him. “My whole library,” said she, “is in the wall-press here: they are rather books which I do not throw aside, than which I have taken up. Lydia wants a pious book: there are one or two of that sort among them. Persons, who throughout the whole twelve months are worldly, think it necessary to be godly at a time of straits: all moral and religious matters they regard as physis, which is to be taken, with

aversion, when they are unwell : in a clergyman, a moralist, they see nothing but a doctor, whom they cannot soon enough get rid of. Now, I confess, I look upon religion as a kind of diet, which can only be so when I make a constant practice of it, when throughout the whole twelve months I never lose it out of sight."

She searched among the books : she found some edifying works, as they are called. " It was of my mother," said Theresa, " that poor Lydia learned to have recourse to books like these. While her gallant continued faithful, plays and novels were her life ; his departure brought religious writings once more into credit. I, for my share, cannot understand," continued she, " how men have made themselves believe that God speaks to us through books and histories. The man, to whom the universe does not reveal directly what relation it has to him ; whose heart does not tell him what he owes himself and others, that man will scarcely learn it out of books ; which generally do little more than give our errors names."

She left our friend alone : he passed his evening in examining the little library ; it had in truth been gathered quite by chance.

Theresa, for the few days Wilhelm spent with her, continued still the same : she told him the consequences of that singular incident at different times with great minuteness. Day and hour, place and name, were present to her memory : we

shall here compress into a word or two, so much of it as will be necessary for the information of our readers.

The reason of Lothario's quick departure was unhappily too easy to explain. He had met Theresa's mother on her journey : her charms attracted him ; she was no niggard of them ; and this luckless transitory aberration came at length to shut him out from being united to a lady, whom nature seemed to have expressly made for him. As for Theresa, she continued in the pure circle of her duties. They learned that Lydia had been living in the neighbourhood in secret. She was happy that the marriage, though for unknown causes, had not been completed. She endeavoured to renew her intimacy with Lothario : and more, as it seemed, out of desperation than affection, by surprise than with consideration, from tedium than of purpose, he had met her wishes.

Theresa was quiet on the subject ; she made no pretensions farther to him ; and if he had even been her husband, she would probably have had sufficient spirit to endure a matter of this kind, if it had not troubled her domestic order : at least she often used to say, that a wife, who properly conducted her economy, should take no umbrage at such little fancies of her husband, but be always certain that he would return.

Ere long, Theresa's mother had deranged her fortune : the losses fell upon the daughter, whose

share of the effects, in consequence, was small. The old lady, who had been Theresa's benefactress, died; leaving her a little property in land, and a handsome sum, by way of legacy. Theresa soon contrived to make herself at home in this new narrow circle. Lothario offered her a better property, Jarno endeavouring to negotiate the business; but she refused it. "I will shew," said she, "in this little that I deserved to share the great with him: but I keep this before me, that, should accident embarrass me, on my own account or that of others, I will betake myself without the smallest hesitation to my generous friend."

There is nothing less liable to be concealed and unemployed than well-directed practical activity. Scarcely had she settled in her little property, when her acquaintance and advice began to be desired by many of her neighbours; and the proprietor of the adjacent lands gave her plainly enough to understand, that it depended on herself alone, whether she would take his hand, and be the heiress of the greater part of his estates. She had already mentioned the matter to our friend: she often jested with him about marriages, suitable and unsuitable.

"Nothing gives a greater loose to people's tongues, than when a marriage happens, which they can denominate unsuitable: and yet the unsuitable are far more common than the suitable; for, alas! with most marriages, it is not long till

things assume a very piteous look. The confusion of ranks by marriage can be called unsuitable, only when the one party is unable to participate in the manner of existence which is native, habitual, and which at length grows absolutely necessary to the other. The different classes have different ways of living, which they cannot change or communicate to one another; and this is the reason, why connexions such as these in general were better not be formed. Yet exceptions, and exceptions of the happiest kind, are possible. Thus too, the marriage of a young woman with a man advanced in life is generally unsuitable; yet I have seen some such turn out extremely well. For me, I know but of one kind of marriage that would be entirely unsuitable; that in which I should be called upon to make a show and manage ceremonies: I had rather give my hand to the son of any honest farmer in the neighbourhood."

Our friend at length made ready for returning. He requested of Theresa to obtain for him a parting word with Lydia. The impassioned girl at last consented: he said some kindly things to her; to which she answered: "The first burst of anguish I have conquered. Lothario will be ever dear to me: but for those friends of his, I know them; and it grieves me that they are about him. The Abbé, for a whim's sake, could leave a person in extreme need, or even plunge one into it; the Doctor would have all things to go on like clock-

work ; Jarno has no heart ; and you—at least no force of character ! Just go on ; let these three people use you as their tool ; they will have many an execution to commit to you. For a long time, as I know well, my presence has been hateful to them : I had not found out their secret, but I had observed that they had one. Why these bolted rooms ? these strange passages ? Why can no one ever reach the central tower ? Why did they banish me, whenever it was in their power, to my own chamber ? I will confess, that jealousy at first incited me to these discoveries : I feared some lucky rival might be hid there. I have now laid aside that suspicion : I am well convinced that Lothario loves me, that he means honourably by me : but I am quite as well convinced that his false and artful friends betray him. If you would really do him service ; if you would ever be forgiven for the injury which I have suffered from you, free him from the hands of these men. But what am I expecting ! Give this letter to him : repeat what it contains ; that I will love him forever, that I depend upon his word. Ah !” cried she, rising, and throwing herself with tears upon Theresa’s neck : “ he is surrounded by my foes ; they will endeavour to persuade him that I have sacrificed nothing for his sake : oh ! Lothario may well believe that he is worthy of any sacrifice, without needing to be grateful for it.”

Wilhelm’s parting with Theresa was more cheer-

ful: she wished that they might soon meet again. "Me you wholly know," said she: "I alone have talked while we have been together. It will be your duty, next time, to repay my candour."

During his return, he kept contemplating this new and bright phenomenon, with the most lively recollection. What confidence had she inspired him with! He thought of Mignon and Felix; and how happy they might be if under her direction: then he thought of himself; and felt what pleasure it would be to live beside a human being so entirely serene and clear. As he approached Lothario's Castle, he observed, with more than usual interest, the central tower and the many passages and side-buildings: he resolved to question Jarno or the Abbé on the subject, by the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER VII.

ON arriving at the Castle, Wilhelm found its noble owner in the way of full recovery : the Doctor and the Abbé had gone off ; Jarno alone was there. It was not long till the patient now and then could ride ; sometimes by himself ; sometimes with his friends. His conversation was at once courteous and earnest, instructive and enlivening : you could often notice in it traces of a tender sensibility, although he strove to hide it, and almost seemed to blame it, when against his will it came to view.

One evening while at table he was silent, though his look was very cheerful.

“ To-day,” said Jarno, “ you have met with an adventure ; and a pleasing one ? ”

“ I give you credit for your penetration ! ” said Lothario. “ Yes, I have met with a very pleasing adventure. At another time, perhaps I should not have considered it so charming as to-day, when it came upon me so attractively. Towards night, I rode out beyond the river, through the hamlets, by a path which I had often visited in former years. My corporeal sufferings must have reduced

me more than I supposed: I felt weak; but as my strength was re-awakening, I was as it were new-born. All objects seemed to wear the hues which they had worn in earlier times; all looked graceful, lovely, charming, as they have not looked to me for many years. I easily observed that it was mere debility; yet I continued to enjoy it: I rode softly onwards, and could now conceive how men may grow to like diseases, which attune us to those sweet emotions. You know, perhaps, what used of old so frequently to lead me that way?"

"If I mistake not," answered Jarno, "it was a little love concern, you were engaged in with a farmer's daughter."

"It might be called a great one," said Lothario: "for we loved each other deeply, seriously, and for a goodly time. To-day, it happened, every thing combined to represent before me in its liveliest colour, the earliest season of our love. The boys were again shaking maybugs from the trees; the ashen grove had not grown larger since the day I saw her first. It was now long since I had met with Margaret. She is married at a distance; and I had heard by chance, that she was come with her children, some weeks ago, to pay a visit to her father."

"This ride then was not altogether accidental?"

"I will not deny," replied Lothario, "that I wished to meet her. On coming near the house, I saw her father sitting at the door; a child of

probably a year old was standing by him. As I approached, a female gave a hasty look from an upper window ; and a minute afterwards, I heard some person tripping down stairs. I thought surely it was she : and I will confess, I was flattering myself that she had recognised me, and was hastening to meet me. But what was my surprise and disappointment, when she bounded from the door ; seized the child, to which the horses had come pretty close, and took it in ! It gave a painful twinge to me : my vanity, however, was a little solaced, when I thought I saw a tint of redness on her neck, and on the ear, which was uncovered.

“ I drew up, and spoke a little with the father, glancing sideways, in the meantime, over all the windows, to observe if she would not appear at some of them : but no trace of her was visible. Ask I would not ; so I rode away. My displeasure was a little mollified by wonder : although I had not seen the face, it appeared to me that she was scarcely changed ; and ten years are a pretty space ! Nay she looked even younger, quite as slim, as light of foot ; her neck if possible was lovelier than before ; her cheeks as easily susceptible of blushes ; yet she was the mother of six children, perhaps of more. This apparition suited the enchantment which surrounded me so well, that I rode along with feelings grown still younger : and I did not turn till I was at the forest, when the sun

was going down. Strongly as the falling dew, and the prescription of our Doctor, called upon me to proceed directly home, I could not help again going round by the farm-house. I observed a woman walking up and down the garden, which is fenced by a light hedge. I rode along the foot-path to it; and found myself at no great distance from the person whom I wanted.

“ Though the evening sun was glancing in my eyes, I saw that she was busy with the hedge, which only slightly covered her. I thought I recognised my mistress. On coming up I halted, not without a palpitation at the heart. Some high twigs of wild roses, which a soft air was blowing to and fro, made her figure indistinct to me. I spoke to her, asked her how she was. She answered in an under-tone: ‘ Quite well.’ In the meantime I perceived a child behind the hedge, engaged in plucking roses, and I took the opportunity of asking where her other children were. ‘ It is not my child,’ said she: ‘ that were rather early!’ And at this moment, it happened that the twigs were blown aside, and her face could be distinctly seen. I knew not what to make of the affair. It was my mistress, and it was not. Almost younger, almost lovelier than she used to be ten years before. ‘ Are you not the farmer’s daughter then?’ inquired I, half confused. ‘ No,’ said she: ‘ I am her cousin.’

“ ‘ You resemble one another wonderfully,’ added I.

“ ‘ Yes, so says every one that knew her half-a-score of years ago.’

“ I continued putting various questions to her : my mistake was pleasant to me, even after I had found it out. I could not leave this living image of bygone blessedness, that stood before me. The child meanwhile had gone away ; it had wandered to the pond in search of flowers. She took her leave, and hastened after it.

“ I had now however learned, that my former love was really in her father’s house : while riding forward, I employed myself in guessing whether it had been her cousin or she, that had secured the child from harm. I more than once in thought repeated all the circumstances of the incident : I can scarce remember of any thing that has affected me more gratefully. But I feel that I am still unwell : we must ask the Doctor to deliver us from the remains of this pathetic humour.”

With confidential narratives of pretty love adventures, it often happens as with ghost-stories ; when the first is told, the others follow of themselves.

Our little party, in recalling other times, found numerous passages of this description. Lothario had the most to tell. Jarno’s histories were all of one peculiar character : what Wilhelm could dis-

close we know already. He was very much afraid that they might mention his adventure with the Countess ; but it was not hinted at, not even in the remotest manner.

“ It is true,” observed Lothario, “ there can scarcely any feeling in the world be more agreeable, than when the heart, after a pause of indifference, again opens to love for some new object : yet I would for ever have renounced that happiness, had fate been pleased to unite me with Theresa. We are not always youths ; we ought not always to be children. To the man, who knows the world ; who understands what he should do in it, what he should hope from it, nothing can be more desirable than meeting with a wife, who will everywhere co-operate with him, who will everywhere prepare his way for him ; whose diligence takes up what his must leave ; whose occupation spreads itself on every side, while his must travel forward on its single path. What a heaven had I figured for myself beside Theresa ! Not the heaven of an enthusiastic bliss ; but of a sure life on earth : order in prosperity, courage in adversity, care for the smallest, and a spirit capable of comprehending and managing the greatest. Oh ! I saw in her the qualities, which when developed, make such women as we find in history, whose excellence appears to us far preferable to that of men : this clearness of view ; this expertness in all emergencies ; this sureness in details, which brings the whole so

accurately out, although they never seem to think of it. You may well forgive me," added he, and turned to Wilhelm with a smile, " that I forsook Aurelia for Theresa : with the one I could expect a calm and cheerful life, with the other not a happy hour."

" I will confess," said Wilhelm, " that in coming hither, I had no small anger in my heart against you ; that I proposed to censure with severity your conduct to Aurelia."

" It was really censurable," said Lothario : " I should not have exchanged my friendship for her with the sentiment of love ; I should not, in place of the respect which she deserved, have intruded an attachment she was neither calculated to cite nor to maintain. Alas ! she was not lovely when she loved ; the greatest misery, which can befall a woman."

" Well it is past !" said Wilhelm. " We cannot always shun the things we blame : in spite of us, our feelings and our actions sometimes strangely swerve from their natural and right direction. Yet there are certain duties which we never should lose sight of. However, peace be to the ashes of our friend ! Without censuring ourselves or her, let us, with sympathizing hearts, strew flowers upon her grave. But at the grave, in which the hapless mother sleeps, let me ask why you acknowledge not the child ; a son whom any father might rejoice in, and whom you appear entirely to over-

look ? With your pure and tender nature, how can you altogether cast away the instinct of a parent ? All this while you have not spent one syllable upon that precious creature, of whose attractions I could say so much."

" Whom do you speak of ?" asked Lothario :
" I do not understand you."

" Of whom but of your son, Aurelia's son, the lovely child, to whose good fortune there is nothing wanting, but that a tender father should acknowledge and receive him."

" You mistake, my friend," exclaimed Lothario :
" Aurelia never had a son, at least by me : I know of no child, else I would with joy acknowledge it ; and even in the present case, I will gladly look upon the little creature as a relic of her, and take charge of educating it. But did she ever give you to believe that the boy was hers, was mine ?"

" I cannot recollect that I ever heard a word from her expressly on the subject : but we took it up so, and I never doubted of it for a moment."

" I can give you something like a clue to this perplexity," said Jarno. " An old woman, whom you must have noticed often, gave Aurelia the child ; she accepted it with passion, hoping to alleviate her sorrows by its presence : and, in truth, it gave her many a comfortable hour."

The discovery disquieted our friend extremely : he thought of his dear Mignon and his beautiful

Felix with the liveliest distinctness. He expressed his wish to remove them both from the state in which they were.

“ We shall soon arrange it,” said Lothario. “ The little girl may be committed to Theresa ; she cannot be in better hands. As for the boy, I think you should yourself take charge of him : what in us the women leave uncultivated, children cultivate, when we retain them near us.”

“ But first, I think,” said Jarno, “ you will once for all renounce the stage, as you have no talent for it.”

Our friend was struck ; he was obliged to curb himself, for Jarno’s harsh sentence had not slightly wounded his self-love. “ If you convince me of this,” replied he, forcing a smile, “ you will do me a service ; though it is but a mournful service to rouse one from a pleasing dream.”

“ Without enlarging on the subject,” answered Jarno, “ I could merely wish that you would go and fetch the children. The rest will come in course.”

“ I am ready,” answered Wilhelm : “ I am restless, and curious to see if I can get no farther knowledge of the boy : I long to see the little girl, who has attached herself so strangely to me.”

It was agreed that he should lose no time in setting out. Next day he had prepared himself ; his horse was saddled : he only waited for Lothario,

to take leave of him. At the dinner hour, they went as usual to table, not waiting for the master of the house. He did not come till late ; and then sat down by them.

“ I could bet,” said Jarno, “ that to-day you have again been making trial of your tenderness of heart ; you have not been able to withstand the curiosity to see your quondam love.”

“ Guessed !” replied Lothario.

“ Let us hear,” said Jarno, “ how it went : I long exceedingly to know.”

“ I confess,” replied Lothario, “ the affair lay nearer to my heart than it reasonably ought : so I formed the resolution of again riding out, and actually seeing the person, whose renewed young image had affected me with such a pleasing illusion. I alighted at some distance from the house, and sent the horses to a side, that the children, who were playing at the door, might not be disturbed. I entered the house ; by chance she met me just within the threshold : it was herself ; and I recognised her, notwithstanding the striking change. She had grown stouter, and seemed to be larger : her gracefulness was shaded by a look of staidness ; her vivacity had passed into a calm reflectiveness. Her head, which once she bore so airily and freely, drooped a little ; slight furrows had been traced upon her brow.

“ She cast down her eyes on seeing me ; but no

blush announced an inward movement of the heart. I held her out my hand, she gave me hers : I inquired about her husband, he was absent ; about her children, she stepped out and called them, all came in and gathered round her. Nothing is more charming than to see a mother with a child upon her arm ; nothing is more reverend than a mother among many children. That I might say something, I asked the name of the youngest. She desired me to walk in, and see her father : I agreed ; she introduced me to the room, where every thing was standing, almost just as I had left it ; and what seemed stranger still, the fair cousin, her living image, was sitting on the very seat behind the spinning-wheel, where I had found my love so often in the self-same form. A little girl, the very figure of her mother, had come after us ; and thus I stood in the most curious scene, between the future and the past, as in a grove of oranges, where within a little circle, flowers and fruits are living, in successive stages of their growth, beside each other. The cousin went away to fetch us some refreshment ; I gave the woman I had loved so much my hand, and said to her : ‘ I feel a true joy in seeing you again.’ ‘ You are very good to say so,’ answered she : ‘ but I also can assure you that I feel the highest joy. How often have I wished to see you once more in my life ! I have wished it in moments, which I regarded as my

last.' She said this with a settled voice, without appearance of emotion, with that natural air which of old delighted me so much. The cousin returned; the father with her: and I leave you to conceive with what feelings I remained, and with what I came away."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN his journey to the town, our friend was thinking of the lovely women whom he knew, or had heard of: their curious fortunes, which contained so little happiness, were present to him with a sad distinctness. "Ah!" cried he, "poor Mariana! What shall I yet learn of thee? And thou noble Amazon, glorious protecting spirit, to whom I owe so much, whom I everywhere expect to meet, and nowhere see, in what mournful circumstances may I find thee, shouldst thou again appear before me!"

On his arrival in the town, there was not one of his acquaintances at home: he hastened to the theatre, imagining that they would be rehearsing. Here however all was still; the house seemed empty; one little door alone was open. Passing through it to the stage, he found Aurelia's ancient serving-maid, employed in sewing linen for a new decoration: there was barely light enough to let her work. Felix and Mignon were sitting by her on the floor: they had a book between them; and while Mignon read aloud, Felix was repeating all

the words, as if he too knew his letters, as if he too could read.

The children started up, and ran to him: he embraced them with the tenderest feelings, and brought them closer to the woman. "Art thou the person," said he to her, with an earnest voice, "from whom Aurelia received this child?" She looked up from her work, and turned her face to him: he saw her in full light; he started back in terror; it was old Barbara.

"Where is Mariana?" cried he. "Far from here," replied the crone.

"And Felix ——?"

"Is the son of that unhappy, and too true and tender-hearted girl. May you never feel what you have made us suffer! May the treasure which I now deliver you, make you as happy as he made us wretched!"

She arose to go away: Wilhelm held her fast. "I mean not to escape you," said she; "let me fetch a paper that will make you glad and sorrowful."

She retired; and Wilhelm gazed upon the child with a painful joy: he durst not reckon him his own. "He is thine!" cried Mignon: "He is thine!" and pressed the child to Wilhelm's knee.

Barbara came back, and handed him a letter. "Here are Mariana's last words," said she.

"She is dead!" cried he.

“ Dead,” said the old woman. “ I wish to spare you all reproaches.”

Astonished and confounded, Wilhelm broke the letter up: but scarcely had he read the first words of it, when a bitter grief took hold of him; he let the letter fall; and sank upon a seat. Mignon hurried to him, trying to console him. In the meantime, Felix had picked up the letter; he teased his playmate, till she yielded, till she knelt beside him, and read it over. Felix repeated the words, and Wilhelm was compelled to hear them twice. “ If this sheet should ever reach thee, then lament thy ill-starred friend. Thy love has caused her death. The boy, whose birth I survive but a few days, is thine: I die faithful to thee, much as appearances may be against me: with thee I lost every thing that bound me to life. I die content; for they have assured me that the child is healthy and will live. Listen to old Barbara; forgive her; farewell, and forget me not.”

What a painful, and yet to his comfort, half enigmatic letter! Its contents pierced through his heart, as the children, stuttering and stammering, pronounced and repeated them.

“ There you have it now!” said the crone, not waiting till he had recovered. “ Thank Heaven that having lost so true a love, you have still so fine a child remaining. Your grief will be unequalled, when you learn how the poor good girl

stood faithful to you to the end ; how miserable she became, and what she sacrificed for your sake."

" Let me drain the cup of sorrow and of joy at once !" cried Wilhelm. " Convince me, even persuade me that she was a good girl, that she deserved respect as well as love ; then leave me to my grief for her irreparable loss."

" It is not yet time," said Barbara ; " I have work to do, and I would not we were seen together. Let it be a secret that Felix is your son : I should have too much abuse to suffer from the company, for having formerly deceived them. Mignon will not betray us : she is good and close."

" I have known it long, and I said nothing," answered Mignon. " How is it possible ?" cried Barbara. " Whence ?" cried Wilhelm.

" The spirit told it me."

" Where ? Where ?"

" In the vault, when the old man drew his knife, it called to me : ' Bring his father,' and I thought it must be thou."

" *Who* called to thee ?"

" I know not ; in my heart, in my head, I was terrified ; I trembled, I prayed, then it called and I understood it."

Wilhelm pressed her to his heart ; recommended Felix to her, and retired. He had not observed till then that she was grown much paler and thinner, than when he left her. Madam Melina was the

first acquaintance whom he met with : she received him in the friendliest manner. " O that you might find every thing among us as you wished," exclaimed she.

" I doubt it," answered Wilhelm ; " I do not expect it. Confess that they have taken all their measures to dispense with me."

" Why would you go away ?" replied his friend.

" We cannot soon enough convince ourselves," said he, " how very simply we may be dispensed with in the world. What important personages we conceive ourselves to be ! We think that it is we alone who animate the circle which we move in ; that, in our absence, life, nourishment, and breath, will make a general pause : and alas ! the void which occurs is scarce remarked, so quickly is it filled again ; nay it is often but the place, if not for something better, at least for something more agreeable."

" And the sorrows of our friends are we not to take into account ?"

" For our friends, too, it is well, when they soon recover their composure, when they say each to himself : There where thou art, there where thou remainest, accomplish what thou canst ; be busy, be courteous, and let the present scene delight thee."

On a narrower inquiry, he found what he had looked for ; the opera had been set up, and was exclusively attracting the attention of the public. His parts had in the meanwhile been distributed

between Horatio and Laertes; and both of them were in the habit of eliciting from the spectators far more liberal applause, than he had ever been enabled to obtain.

Laertes entered, and Madam Melina cried: "Look you here at this lucky fellow: he is soon to be a capitalist, or Heaven knows what!" Wilhelm, in embracing him, discovered that his coat was superfine: the rest of his apparel was simple, but of the very best materials.

"Solve me the riddle!" cried our friend.

"You are still in time to learn," replied Laertes, "that my running to and fro is now about to be repaid, that a partner in a large commercial house is turning to advantage my acquirements from books or observation, and allowing me a share with him. I would give something, could I purchase back my confidence in women: there is a pretty niece in the house; and I see well enough that, if I pleased, I might soon be a made man."

"You have not heard," said Frau Melina, "that a marriage has already taken place among ourselves? Serlo is actually wedded to the fair Elmira: her father would not tolerate their secret correspondence."

They talked, in this manner, about many things that had occurred while he was absent: nor was it difficult for him to observe, that, according to the present temper and constitution of the company, his dismissal had already taken place.

He was impatiently expecting Barbara, who had appointed him to wait for her far in the night. She was to come when all were sleeping; she required as many preparations, as if she had been the youngest maiden gliding in to her beloved. Meanwhile he read, a hundred times, the letter she had given him; read with unspeakable delight the word *faithful* in the hand of his darling; with horror the announcement of her death, whose approaches she appeared to view unmoved.

Midnight was past, when something rustled at the half-open door, and Barbara came in with a little basket. "I am to tell you the story of our woes," said she; "and I must believe that you will sit unmoved at the recital; that you are waiting for me but to satisfy your curiosity; that you will now, as you did formerly, retire within your cold selfishness, while our hearts are breaking. But look you here! Thus, on that happy evening, did I bring you the bottle of champagne; thus did I place the three glasses on the table: and as you then began, with soft nursery tales, to cozen us and lull us asleep, so will I now with stern truths instruct you and keep you waking."

Wilhelm knew not what to say, when the crone in fact let go the cork, and filled the three glasses to the brim.

"Drink!" cried she, having emptied at a draught her foaming glass. "Drink, ere the spirit of it pass! This third glass shall froth away

untasted to the memory of my unhappy Mariana. How red were her lips, when she then drank your health ! Ah ! and now forever pale and cold !”

“ Sibyl ! Fury !” Wilhelm cried, springing up, and striking the table with his fist, “ What evil spirit possesses thee and drives thee ? For what dost thou take me, that thou thinkest the simplest narrative of Mariana’s death and sorrows will not harrow me enough, but usest these hellish arts to sharpen my torment ? If thy unsatiable greediness is such, that thou must revel at the funeral table, drink and speak ! I have loathed thee from of old ; and I cannot reckon Mariana guiltless while I even look upon thee, her companion.”

“ Softly, Mein Herr !” replied the crone ; “ you shall not ruffle me. Your debts to us are deep and dark : the railing of a debtor does not anger one. But you are right : the simplest narrative will punish you sufficiently. Hear then the struggle and the victory of Mariana striving to continue yours.”

“ Continue mine ?” cried Wilhelm : “ What fable dost thou mean to tell me ?”

“ Interrupt me not,” said she ; “ hear me, and then give what belief you list : to me it is the same. Did you not, the last night you were with us, find a letter in the room and take it with you ?”

“ I found the letter *after* I had taken it with me : it was lying in the neck-kерchief, which, in the warmth of my love, I had seized and carried off.”

“ What did the sheet contain ?”

“ The expectation of an angry lover to be better treated on the next, than he had been on the preceding evening. And that you kept your word to him, I need not be told ; for I saw him with my own eyes gliding from your house before daybreak.”

“ You may have seen him : but what occurred within ; how sadly Mariana passed that night, how fretfully I passed it, you are yet to learn. I will be altogether candid : I will neither hide nor palliate the fact, that I persuaded Mariana to yield to the solicitations of a certain Norberg : it was with repugnance that she followed my advice, nay that she even heard it. He was rich ; he seemed attached ; I hoped he would be constant. Soon after, he was forced to go upon his journey, and Mariana became acquainted with you. What had I then to abide ! What to hinder, what to undergo ! ‘ O !’ cried she often, ‘ hadst thou spared my youth, my innocence but four short weeks, I might have found a worthy object of my love, I had then been worthy of him, and love might have given, with a quiet conscience, what now I have sold against my will.’ She entirely abandoned herself to her affection for you : I

need not ask if you were happy. Over her understanding I had an unbounded power ; for I knew the means of satisfying all her little inclinations : but over her heart I had no control ; for she never sanctioned what I did for her, what I counselled her to do, when her heart said nay. It was only to irresistible necessity that she would yield : but ere long the necessity appeared to her extremely pressing. In the first period of her youth, she had never known want : by a complication of misfortunes her people lost their fortune ; the poor girl had been used to have a number of conveniences ; and upon her young spirit, certain principles of honour had been stamped, which made her restless, without much helping her. She had not the smallest skill in worldly matters ; she was innocent in the strictest meaning of the word. She had no idea that one could buy without paying ; nothing frightened her more than when she was in debt ; she always rather liked to give than take. It was such a posture of affairs alone, which made it possible, that she could be constrained to give herself away, in order to pay off a multitude of little debts which weighed upon her."

" And couldst not thou," cried Wilhelm in an angry tone, " have saved her ?"

" O yes !" replied the beldame ; " with hunger and need ; with sorrow and privation : but for this I was not trained."

“ Abominable, base procuress ! So you sacrificed the hapless creature ? Offered her up to your throat, to your insatiable man ? ”

“ It were better to compose yourself, and cease from your reviling,” said the dame. “ If you will revile, go to your high noble houses : there you will meet with many a mother full of anxious cares to find out for some lovely, heavenly maiden, the most odious of men, provided he be also the richest. See the poor creature shivering and faltering before her fate ; and nowhere finding consolation, till some more experienced female lets her understand that, by marriage, she acquires the right, in future, to dispose of her heart and person as she pleases.”

“ Peace ! ” cried Wilhelm : “ Dost thou think that one crime can be the excuse of another ? To thy story, without farther observations ! ”

“ Do you listen then, without blaming ! Mariana became yours against my will. In this adventure at least, I have nothing to reproach myself with. Norberg returned ; he made haste to visit Mariana : she received him coldly and angrily ; she would not even admit him to a kiss. I made use of all my art in apologizing for her conduct : I let him know that her confessor had awakened her conscience, and that so long as conscientious scruples lasted, one was called on to respect them. I at last so far succeeded with him, that he went away ; I promising to do my utmost for him

He was rich and rude ; but there was a touch of goodness in him, and he loved Mariana without bounds. He promised to be patient ; and I laboured with the greatest ardour not to try him too severely. With Mariana I had a stubborn contest : I persuaded her, nay, I may call it forced her, by the threat of leaving her, to write to Norberg and invite him for the night. You came, and by chance picked up his answer in the neckerchief. Your presence broke my game. For scarcely were you gone, when she anew begun her lamentation : she swore she would not be unfaithful to you ; she was so passionate, so frantic, that I could not help sincerely pitying her. In the end, I promised, that for this night also, I would pacify her lover, and send him off, under some pretence or other. I entreated her to go to bed ; but she did not seem to trust me : she kept on her clothes, and at last fell asleep, without undressing, agitated and exhausted with weeping as she was.

“ Norberg came : representing in the blackest hues, her conscientious agonies and her repentance, I endeavoured to retain him : he wished to see her, and I went into the room to prepare her ; he followed me, and both of us at once came forward to her bed. She awoke ; sprang wildly up, and tore herself from our arms : she conjured and begged, she entreated, threatened, and declared she would not yield. She was improvi-

dent enough to let fall some words about the true state of her affections; which poor Norberg had to understand in a spiritual sense. At length he left her, and she locked her door. I kept him long with me, and talked with him about her state: I told him that she was with child, that, poor girl, she should be humoured. He was so delighted with his fatherhood, with his prospect of a boy, that he granted every thing which she required, that he promised rather to set out and travel for a time, than vex his dear, and injure her by these internal troubles. With such intentions, at an early hour, he glided out; and if you, Mein Herr, stood sentry by our house, there was nothing wanting to your happiness, but to have looked into the bosom of your rival, whom you thought so favoured and so fortunate, and whose appearance drove you to despair."

"Art thou speaking truth?" said Wilhelm.

"True," said the crone, "as I still hope to drive you to despair.

"Yes, certainly you would despair, if I could rightly paint to you the following morning. How cheerfully did she awake; how kindly did she call me in; how warmly thank me, how cordially press me to her bosom! 'Now,' said she, stepping up to her mirror with a smile, 'can I again take pleasure in myself, and in my looks, since once more I am my own, am his, my one beloved friend's. How sweet is it to conquer! How I

thank thee for taking charge of me ; for having turned thy prudence and thy understanding once at least to my advantage ! Stand by me, and devise the means of making me entirely happy !

“ I assented, would not irritate her : I flattered her hopes, and she caressed me tenderly. If she retired but a moment from the window, I was made to stand and watch ; for you, of course, would pass ; for she at least would see you. Thus did we spend the restless day. At night, at the accustomed hour, we looked for you with certainty. I was already at the stair ; I grew weary and came in to her again. With surprise I found her in her military dress : she looked cheerful and charming, beyond what I had ever seen her. ‘ Do I not deserve,’ said she, ‘ to appear to-night in man’s apparel ? Have I not struggled bravely ? My dearest shall see me as he saw me for the first time : I will press him as tenderly and with greater freedom to my heart than then ; for am not I his much more, than I was then, when a noble resolution had not freed me ? But,’ added she, after pausing for a little, ‘ I have not yet entirely won him ; I must still risk the uttermost, in order to be worthy, to be certain of possessing him ; I must disclose the whole to him, discover to him all my state, then leave it to himself to keep or to reject me. This scene I am preparing for my friend, preparing for myself : and were his feelings capable of casting me away,

I should then belong again entirely to myself ; my punishment would bring me consolation, I would suffer all that fate could lay upon me.'

" With such purposes and hopes, Mein Herr, this lovely girl expected you : you came not. Oh ! How shall I describe the state of watching and of hope ? I see thee still before me, with what love, what heartfelt love, thou spokest of the man, whose cruelty thou hadst not yet experienced."

" Good, dear Barbara !" cried Wilhelm, springing up, and seizing the old woman by the hand, " we have had enough of mummery and preparation ! Thy indifferent, thy calm, contented tone betrays thee. Give me back my Mariana ! She is living, she is near at hand. Not in vain didst thou choose this late lonely hour to visit me ; not in vain hast thou prepared me by thy most delicious narrative. Where is she ? where hast thou hid her ? I believe all, I will promise to believe all, so thou but show her to me, so thou give her to my arms. The shadow of her I have seen already : let me clasp her once more to my bosom. I will kneel before her, I will entreat forgiveness ; I will congratulate her upon her victory over herself and thee ; I will bring my Felix to her. Come ! Where hast thou concealed her ? Leave *her*, leave me no longer in uncertainty ! Thy object is attained. Where hast thou hid her ? Let me light thee with this candle, let me once more see her fair and kindly face !"

He had pulled old Barbara from her chair : she stared at him ; tears started to her eyes, wild pangs of grief took hold of her. “ What luckless error,” cried she, “ leaves you still a moment’s hope ? Yes, I have hidden her ; but beneath the ground : neither the light of the sun nor any social taper shall again illuminate her kindly face. Take the boy Felix to her grave, and say to him : ‘ There lies thy mother, whom thy father doomed unheard.’ The heart of Mariana beats no longer with impatience to behold you ; not in a neighbouring chamber is she waiting the conclusion of my narrative, or fable ; the dark chamber has received her, to which no bridegroom follows, from which none comes to meet a lover.”

She cast herself upon the floor beside a chair, and wept bitterly. Wilhelm now, for the first time, felt entirely convinced that Mariana was no more : his emotions it is easy to conceive. The old woman rose : “ I have nothing more to tell you,” cried she, and threw a packet on the table. “ Here are some writings that will put your cruelty to shame : peruse these sheets with unwet eyes, if it is in your power.” She glided softly out. Our friend had not the heart that night to open up the pocket-book, he had himself presented it to Mariana ; he knew that she had carefully preserved in it every letter he had sent her. Next morning he prevailed upon himself : he untied the ribband ; little notes came forward written

with pencil in his own hand; and recalled to him every situation, from the first day of their graceful acquaintance to the last of their stern separation. In particular, it was not without acute anguish, that he read a small series of billets, which had been addressed to himself, and to which, as he saw from their tenor, Werner had refused admittance.

“No one of my letters has yet penetrated to thee; my entreaties, my prayers have not reached thee: was it thyself that gave these cruel orders? Shall I never see thee more? Yet again I attempt it: I entreat thee, come, O come! I ask not to retain thee, if I might but once more press thee to my heart.”

“When I used to sit beside thee, holding thy hands, looking in thy eyes; and with the full heart of love and trust to call thee, ‘Dear, dear good Wilhelm!’ it would please thee so, that I had to repeat it over and over. I repeat it once again: ‘Dear, dear good Wilhelm! Be good as thou wert; come, and leave me not to perish in my wretchedness.’”

“Thou regardest me as guilty: I am so; but not as thou thinkest. Come, let me have this single comfort to be altogether known to thee; let what will befall me afterwards.”

“ Not for my sake alone, for thy own too, I beg of thee to come. I feel the intolerable pains which thou art suffering, whilst thou fliest from me: Come, that our separation may be less cruel ! Perhaps I was never worthy of thee till this moment, when thou art repelling me to boundless woe.”

“ By all that is holy, by all that can touch a human heart, I call upon thee ! It involves the safety of a soul, it involves a life, two lives, one of which must ever be dear to thee. This, too, thy suspicion will discredit ; yet I will speak it in the hour of death : the child, which I carry underneath my heart, is thine. Since I began to love thee, no other man has even pressed my hand : O that thy love, that thy uprightness, had been the companions of my youth !”

“ Thou wilt not hear me ? I must even be silent : but these letters will not die ; perhaps they will speak to thee, when the shroud is covering my lips, and the voice of thy repentance cannot reach my ear. Through my weary life, to the last moment, this will be my only comfort : that though I cannot call myself blameless, towards thee I am free from blame.”

Wilhelm could proceed no farther : he resigned

himself entirely to his sorrow ; which became still more afflicting, when, Laertes entering, he was forced to hide his feelings. Laertes showed a purse of ducats ; and began to count and reckon them, assuring Wilhelm that there could be nothing finer in the world than for a man to feel himself in the way to wealth ; that nothing then could trouble or detain him. Wilhelm bethought him of his dream, and smiled ; but at the same time, he remembered with a shudder, that in his vision, Mariana had forsaken him, to follow his departed father, and that both of them at last had moved about the garden, hovering in the air like spirits.

Laertes forced him from his meditations ; he brought him to a coffeehouse, where, immediately on Wilhelm's entrance, several persons gathered round him. They were men who had applauded his performance on the stage : they expressed their joy at meeting him ; lamenting that, as they had heard, he meant to leave the theatre. They spoke so reasonably and kindly of himself and his acting, of his talent, and their hopes from it, that Wilhelm, not without emotion, cried at last : " O how infinitely precious would such sympathy have been to me some months ago ! How instructive, how encouraging ! Never had I turned my mind so totally from the concerns of the stage, never had I gone so far as to despair of the public."

“ So far as this,” said an elderly man who now stepped forward, “ we should never go. The public is large ; true judgment, true feeling, are not quite so rare as one believes ; only the artist ought not to demand an unconditional approval of his work. Unconditional approval is always the least valuable ; conditional you gentlemen are not content with. In life, as in art, I know well, a person must take counsel with himself when he purposes to do or to produce any thing : but when it is produced or done, he must listen with attention to the voices of a number, and with a little practice, out of these many votes he will be able to collect a perfect judgment. The few, who could themselves pronounce one, for the most part hold their peace.”

“ This they should not do,” said Wilhelm. “ I have often heard people, who themselves kept silence in regard to works of merit, complaining and lamenting that silence was kept.”

“ To-day, then, we will speak aloud,” cried a young man : “ You must dine with us, and we will try to pay off a little of the debt which we have owed to you, and sometimes also to our good Aurelia.”

This invitation Wilhelm courteously declined : he went to Frau Melina whom he wished to speak with on the subject of the children, as he meant to take them from her.

Old Barbara's secret was not too religiously ob-

served by him. He betrayed himself so soon as he again beheld the lovely Felix. "O my child!" cried he: "My dear child!" He lifted him, and pressed him to his heart. "Father! What hast thou brought for me?" cried the child. Mignon looked at both, as if she meant to warn them not to blab.

"What new phenomenon is this?" said Frau Melina. They got the children sent away; and Wilhelm, thinking that he did not owe old Barbara the strictest secrecy, disclosed the whole affair to Frau Melina. She viewed him with a smile. "O! these credulous men!" exclaimed she. "If any thing is lying in their path, it is so easy to impose it on them; while in other cases they will neither look to the right nor left, and can value nothing, which they have not previously impressed with the stamp of an arbitrary passion!" She sighed against her will: if our friend had not been altogether blind, he must have noticed in her conduct an affection for him which had never been entirely subdued.

He now spoke with her about the children; how he purposed to keep Felix with him, and to place Mignon in the country. Madam Melina, though sorry at the thought of parting with them, said the plan was good, nay absolutely necessary. Felix was becoming wild with her; and Mignon seemed to need fresh air and other occupation; she was sickly, and was not yet recovering.

“ Let it not mislead you,” added Frau Melina, “ that I have lightly hinted doubts about the boy’s being really yours. The old woman, it is true, deserves but little confidence ; yet a person who invents untruths for her advantage may likewise speak the truth when truths are profitable to her. Aurelia she had hoodwinked to believe that Felix was Lothario’s son : and it is a property of us women that we cordially like the children of our lovers, though we do not know the mothers, or even hate them from the heart.” Felix came jumping in ; she pressed him to her with a tenderness which was not usual to her.

Wilhelm hastened home, and sent for Barbara ; who, however, would not undertake to meet him till the twilight. He received her angrily. “ There is nothing in the world more shameful,” said he, “ than establishing one’s self on lies and fables. Already thou hast done much mischief with them ; and now when thy word could decide the fortune of my life, now must I stand dubious, not venturing to call the child my own, though to possess him without scruple would form my highest happiness. I cannot look upon thee, scandalous creature, without hatred and contempt.”

“ Your conduct, if I speak with candour,” said the crone, “ appears to me intolerable. Even if Felix were not yours, he is the fairest and the loveliest child in nature ; one might purchase him at any price to have him always near one. Is he

not worthy your acceptance? Do I not merit for my care, for the labour I have had with him, a little pension for the small remainder of my life? O! You gentlemen who know no want! it is well for you to talk of truth and honour: but how the miserable being whose smallest necessity is unprovided for, who sees in her perplexities no friend, no help, no counsel; how she is to press through the crowd of selfish men, and to starve in silence, you are seldom at the trouble to consider. Did you read Mariana's letters? They are letters, which she wrote to you at that unhappy season. It was in vain that I attempted to approach you to deliver you these sheets: your savage brother-in-law had so begirt you, that craft and cunning were of no avail; and at last when he began to threaten me and Mariana with imprisonment, I had then to cease my efforts, and renounce all hope. Does not every thing agree with what I told you? And does not Norberg's letter put the story altogether out of doubt?"

"What letter?" asked he.

"Did you not find it in the pocket-book?" said Barbara.

"I have not yet read all of them."

"Give me the pocket-book: on that paper every thing depends. Norberg's luckless billet caused this sorrowful perplexity; another from his hand may loose the knots, so far as aught may still depend upon unravelling them." She

took a letter from the book ; Wilhelm recognised that odious writing ; he constrained himself and read :

“ Tell me, girl, how hast thou got such power over me ? I would not have believed that a goddess herself could make a sighing lover of me. Instead of hastening towards me with open arms, thou shrunkest back from me : one might have taken it for aversion. Is it fair that I should spend the night, with old Barbara, sitting on a trunk, and but two doors between me and my pretty Mariana ? It is too bad, I tell thee ! I have promised to allow thee time to think ; not to press thee unrelentingly ; I could run mad at every wasted quarter of an hour. Have not I given thee gifts according to my power ? Dost thou still doubt of my love ? What wilt thou have ? Do but tell me : thou shalt want for nothing. Would the Devil had the priest that put such stuff into thy head ! Why didst thou go to such a churl ? There are plenty of them that allow young people somewhat. Enough ! I tell thee, things must alter : in two days I must have an answer ; for I am to leave the town ; and if thou become not kind and friendly to me, thou shalt never see me more. - - - ”

In this style, the letter spun itself to great length ; turning, to Wilhelm’s painful satisfaction, still about the same point ; and testifying for the truth of the account which he had got from

Barbara. A second letter clearly proved, that Mariana in the sequel also had maintained her purpose : and it was not without heartfelt grief, that out of these and other papers Wilhelm learned the history of the unlucky girl to the very hour of her death.

Barbara had gradually tamed the rugged Norberg, by announcing to him Mariana's death, and leaving him in the belief, that Felix was his son. Once or twice he had sent her money ; which however she retained for herself, having talked Aurelia into taking charge of bringing up the child. But unhappily this secret source of riches did not long endure. Norberg, by a life of riot, had impaired his fortune ; and by repeated love affairs, his heart was rendered callous to his supposed first-born.

Probable as all this seemed, beautifully as it all agreed, Wilhelm did not venture to give way to joy. He still appeared to dread a present coming from his evil Genius.

“ Your jealous fears,” said Barbara, who guessed his mood of mind, “ time alone can cure. Look upon the child as a stranger one ; take stricter heed of him on that account ; observe his gifts, his temper, his capacities ; and if you do not by and by discover in him the exact resemblance of yourself, your eyes must certainly be bad. Of this I can assure you, were I a man, no one should foist a child on me : but it is a happi-

ness for women, that in these cases men are not so quick of sight."

These things discussed, our friend and Barbara parted: he was to take Felix with him; she to carry Mignon to Theresa, and afterwards to live in any place she pleased, upon a small annuity which he engaged to settle on her.

He sent for Mignon to prepare her for the new arrangement. "Master!" said she, "keep me with thee: it will do me good and do me ill."

He told her that, as she was now grown up, there should be something farther done for her instruction. "I am sufficiently instructed," answered she, "to love and grieve."

He directed her attention to her health, and shewed that she required continuous care, and the direction of a good physician. "Why care for me," said she, "when there are so many things to care for."

After he had laboured greatly to persuade her that he could not take her with him, that he would conduct her to a place where he might often see her, she appeared as if she had not heard a word of it. "Thou wishest not to have me with thee?" said she. "Perhaps it is better: send me to the old Harper; the poor man is lonely where he is."

Wilhelm tried to shew her that the old man was in comfortable circumstances. "Every hour I long for him," replied the child.

“ I did not see,” said Wilhelm, “ that thou wert so fond of him when he was living with us.”

“ I was frightened for him, when he was awake ; I could not bear his eyes : but when he was asleep, I liked so well to sit beside him ! I used to chase the flies from him ; I could not look at him enough. O ! he has stood by me in fearful moments ; none knows how much I owe him. Had I known the road, I should have run away to him already.”

Wilhelm set the circumstances in detail before her ; he said, that she had always been a reasonable child, and that on this occasion also she might do as she desired. “ Reason is cruel,” said she ; “ the heart is better ; I will go as thou requirest, only leave me Felix.”

After much discussion, her opinion was not altered ; and our friend at last resolved on giving Barbara both the children, and sending them together to Theresa. This was the easier for him, that he still feared to look upon the lovely Felix as his son. He would take him in his arm, and carry him about : the child delighted to be held before the glass ; Wilhelm also liked, though unavowedly, to hold him there, and seek resemblances between their faces. If for a moment any striking similarity appeared between them, he would press the boy within his arms ; and then at once affrighted by the thought that he might be mistaken, he would set him down and let him run away. “ O !”

cried he, " if I were to appropriate this priceless treasure, and it then were to be snatched from me, I should be the most unhappy man on earth !"

The children had been sent away ; and Wilhelm was about to take a formal leave of the theatre, when he felt that in reality he had already taken leave, and needed but to go. Mariana was no more ; his two guardian spirits had departed, and his thoughts hied after them. The fair boy hovered like a beautiful uncertain vision in the eyes of his imagination : he saw him, at Theresa's hand, running through the fields and woods, forming his mind and person, in the free air, beside a free and cheerful foster-mother. Theresa had become far dearer to him since he figured her in company with Felix. Even while sitting in the theatre, he thought of her with smiles ; he was almost in her own case, the stage could now produce no more illusion in him.

Serlo and Melina were excessively polite to him, when they observed that he was making no pretensions to his former place. A portion of the public wished to see him act again : this he could not do ; nor in the company did any one desire it, saving Frau Melina.

Of this friend he now took leave ; he was moved at parting with her ; he exclaimed : " Why do we presume to promise any thing depending on an unknown future ! The most slight engagement we have not the power to keep ; far less a purpose of

importance. I feel ashamed in recollecting what I promised to you all in that unhappy night, when we were lying plundered, sick, and wounded, crammed into a miserable tavern. How did misfortune elevate my courage; what a treasure did I think that I had found in my good wishes! And of all this not a jot has taken place! I leave you as your debtor: and my comfort is, that our people prized my promise at its actual worth, and never more took notice of it."

"Be not unjust to yourself," said Frau Melina: "if no one acknowledges what you have done for us, I at least will not forget it. Our whole condition had been different, if you had not been with us. But it is with our purposes as with our wishes. They seem no longer what they were, when they have been accomplished, been fulfilled; and we think we have done, have wished for nothing."

"You shall not by your friendly statement," answered Wilhelm, "put to peace my conscience: I shall always look upon myself as in your debt."

"Nay perhaps you are so," said Madam Melina; "but not in the manner you suppose. We reckon it a shame to fail in the fulfilment of a promise we have uttered with the voice. O my friend! a worthy person by his very presence promises us much! The confidence which he elicits, the inclination he inspires, the hopes which he awakens are unbounded: he is, and he continues in our debt, although he does not know it. Fare

you well ! If our external circumstances have been happily repaired by your direction, there is a void produced by your departure, in my mind, which will not be so easily filled up again."

Before he left the city, Wilhelm wrote a copious sheet to Werner. He had before exchanged some letters : but, not being able to agree, they at length had ceased to write. Now, however, Wilhelm had again approximated to his brother ; he was just about to do what Werner had so earnestly desired. He could say : ' I am abandoning the stage ; I mean to join myself with men, whose intercourse, in every sense, must lead me to a sure and suitable activity.' He inquired about his property : and it now seemed strange to him, that he had never for so long a time disturbed himself about it. He knew not that it was the manner of all persons, who attached importance to their inward cultivation, altogether to neglect their outward circumstances. This had been Wilhelm's case : he now for the first time seemed to notice, that to work effectively, he stood in need of outward means. He entered on his journey, this time, in a temper altogether different from what it had been on the last occasion ; the prospects which he had in view were charming ; he hoped to meet with something cheerful by the way.

CHAPTER IX.

ON returning to Lothario's Castle, Wilhelm found that changes had occurred. Jarno met him with the tidings that Lothario's uncle being dead, the Baron had himself set out to take possession of the heritage. "You come in time," said he, to help the Abbé and me. Lothario has commissioned us to purchase some extensive properties of land in this quarter: he has long contemplated the bargain, and we have now got cash and credit just in season. The only point which made us hesitate, was, that a distant trading house had also views upon the same estates: at length we have determined to make common cause with it, as otherwise we might outbid each other without need or reason. The trader seems to be a prudent man. At present we are making estimates and calculations: we must also settle economically how the lands are to be shared, so that each of us may have a fine estate." The papers were submitted to our friend; the fields, meadows, houses, were inspected; and though Jarno and the Abbé seemed to understand the matter fully, Wilhelm could not help desiring that Theresa had been with them.

In these labours several days were spent, and Wilhelm scarce had time to tell his friends of his adventures and his dubious fatherhood. This incident, to him so interesting, they treated with indifference and levity.

He had noticed, that they frequently in confidential conversation, while at table or in walks, would suddenly stop short, and give their words another application ; thereby showing him at least that they had on the anvil many things which were concealed from him. He bethought him of what Lydia had said ; and he put the greater faith in it, that one entire division of the Castle had been always inaccessible to him. The way to certain galleries, particularly to the ancient tower, with which externally he was so well acquainted, he had often sought, and hitherto in vain.

One evening Jarno said to him : “ We can now consider you as ours, with such security, that it were unjust if we did not introduce you deeper into our mysteries. It is right that a man, when he first enters upon life, should think highly of himself, should determine to attain many eminent distinctions, should endeavour to make all things possible : but when his education has proceeded to a certain pitch, it is advantageous for him that he learn to lose himself among a mass of men, that he learn to live for the sake of others, and to forget himself in an activity prescribed by duty. It is then that he first becomes acquainted with him-

self ; for it is conduct alone that compares us with others. You shall soon see what a curious little world is at your very hand, and how well you are known in it. To-morrow morning before sunrise be dressed and ready."

Jarno came at the appointed hour : he led our friend through certain known and unknown chambers of the Castle, then through several galleries ; until at last they reached a large old door, which was strongly framed with iron. Jarno knocked ; the door went up a little, so as to admit one person. Jarno introduced our friend, and did not follow him. Wilhelm found himself in an obscure and narrow stand : all was dark around him ; and when he tried to go a step forward, he found himself hemmed in. A voice not altogether strange to him cried : " Enter !" and he now discovered that the sides of the place where he was were merely hung with tapestry, through which a feeble light glimmered in to him. " Enter !" cried the voice again : he raised the tapestry and entered.

The hall, in which he now stood, appeared to have at one time been a chapel ; instead of the altar he observed a large table raised some steps above the floor, and covered with a green cloth hanging over it. On the top of this, a drawn curtain seemed as if it hid a picture ; on the sides were spaces beautifully worked, and covered in with fine wire netting, like the shelves of a library ; only here, instead of books, a multitude of rolls

had been inserted. Nobody was in the hall; the rising sun shone through the window, right on Wilhelm, and kindly saluted him as he came in.

“Be seated!” cried a voice, which seemed to issue from the altar. Wilhelm placed himself in a small arm-chair, which stood against the tapestry where he had entered. There was no seat but this in the room; Wilhelm was obliged to take it, though the morning radiance dazzled him; the chair stood fast, he could only keep his hand before his eyes.

But now the curtain, which hung down above the altar, went asunder with a gentle rustling; and showed, within a picture frame, a dark empty aperture. A man stepped forward at it, in a common dress; saluted the astonished looker-on, and said to him: “Do you not recognise me? Among the many things which you would like to know, do you feel no curiosity to learn where your grandfather’s collection of pictures and statues are at present? Have you forgot the painting which you once delighted in so much? Where, think you, is the sick king’s son now languishing?” Wilhelm, without difficulty, recognised the stranger, whom, in that important night, he had conversed with at the inn. “Perhaps,” continued his interrogator, “we should now be less at variance in regard to Destiny and Character.”

Wilhelm was about to answer, when the curtain quickly flew together. “Strange!” said Wilhelm.

by himself: "Can chance occurrences have a connexion? Is what we call Destiny but Chance? Where *is* my grandfather's collection; and why am I remembered of it in these solemn moments?"

He had not leisure to pursue his thoughts: the curtain once more parted; and a person stood before him, whom he instantly perceived to be the country clergyman, that had attended him and his companions on that pleasure sail of theirs. He had a resemblance to the Abbé, though he seemed to be a different person. With a cheerful countenance, in a tone of dignity, he said: "To guard from error, is not the instructor's duty; but to lead the erring pupil; nay, to let him quaff his error in deep satiating draughts, this is the instructor's wisdom. He who only tastes his error, will long dwell with it, will take delight in it as in a singular felicity: while he who drains it to the dregs will, if he be not crazy, find it out." The curtain closed again; and Wilhelm had a little time to think. "What error can he mean," said he within himself, "but the error which has clung to me through all my life; that I sought for cultivation, where it was not to be found; that I fancied I could form a talent in me, while without the smallest gift for it."

The curtain dashed asunder faster than before; an officer advanced, and said in passing: "Learn to know the men who may be trusted!" The curtain closed; and Wilhelm did not long consider,

till he found this officer to be the one who had embraced him in the Count's park, and had caused his taking Jarno for a crimp. How that stranger had come hither, who he was, were riddles to our friend. "If so many men took interest in thee," cried he, "know thy way of life, and how it should be carried on, why did they not conduct thee with greater strictness, with greater seriousness? Why did they favour thy silly sports, instead of drawing thee away from them?"

"Dispute not with us!" cried a voice: "Thou art saved, thou art on the way to the goal. None of thy follies wilt thou repent; none wilt thou wish to repeat; no luckier destiny can be allotted to a man." The curtain went asunder; and in full armour, stood the old King of Denmark in the space. "I am thy father's spirit," said the figure, "and I depart in comfort, since my wishes for thee are accomplished, in a higher sense than I myself contemplated. Steep regions cannot be surmounted save by winding paths; on the plain, straight roads conduct from place to place. Farewell, and think of me, when thou enjoyest what I have provided for thee."

Wilhelm was exceedingly amazed and struck: he thought it was his father's voice; and yet in truth it was not: the present and the past alike confounded and perplexed him.

He had not meditated long, when the Abbé came to view, and placed himself behind the green

table. "Come hither!" cried he to his marveling friend. He went, and mounted up the steps. On the green cloth lay a little roll. "Here is your indenture," said the Abbé: "take it to heart; it is of weighty import." Wilhelm lifted, opened it, and read:

INDENTURE.

ART is long, life short, judgment difficult, occasion transient. To act is easy, to think is hard; to act according to our thought is troublesome. Every beginning is cheerful; the threshold is the place of expectation. The boy stands astonished, his impressions guide him; he learns sportfully, seriousness comes on him by surprise. Imitation is born with us; what should be imitated is not easy to discover. The excellent is rarely found, more rarely valued. The height charms us, the steps to it do not: with the summit in our eye, we love to walk along the plain. It is but a part of art that can be taught; the artist needs it all. Who knows it half, speaks much and is always wrong; who knows it wholly, inclines to act and speaks seldom or late. The former have no secrets and no force: the instruction they can give is like baked bread, savoury and satisfying for a single day; but flour cannot be sown, and seed corn ought not to be ground. Words are good, but they are not the best. The best is not to be explained by words. The spirit in which we act

is the highest matter. Action can be understood and again represented by the spirit alone. No one knows what he is doing, while he acts rightly; but of what is wrong we are always conscious. Whoever works with symbols only, is a pedant, a hypocrite, or a bungler. There are many such, and they like to be together. Their babbling detains the scholar; their obstinate mediocrity vexes even the best. The instruction, which the true artist gives us, opens up the mind: for where words fail him, deeds speak. The true scholar learns from the known to unfold the unknown, and approaches more and more to being a master.

“Enough!” cried the Abbé; “the rest in due time. Now, look round you among these cases.”

Wilhelm went and read the titles of the rolls. With astonishment, he found *Lothario's Apprenticship*, *Jarno's Apprenticeship*, and his own *Apprenticeship* placed there, with many others whose names he did not know.

“May I hope to cast a look into these rolls?”

“In this chamber, there is now nothing hid from you.”

“May I put a question?”

“Without scruple: and you may expect a positive reply, if it concerns a matter, which is nearest to your heart, and ought to be so.”

“Good then! Ye marvellous sages, whose

sight has pierced so many secrets, can you tell me whether Felix is in truth my son?"

"Hail to you for this question!" cried the Abbé, clapping hands for joy. "Felix is your son! By the holiest that lies hid among us, I swear to you, Felix is your son; nor, in our opinion, was the mother that is gone unworthy of you. Receive the lovely child from our hands; turn round, and venture to be happy."

Wilhelm heard a noise behind him: he turned round, and saw a child's face peeping archly through the tapestry at the end of the room; it was Felix. The boy playfully hid himself so soon as he was noticed. "Come forward!" cried the Abbé; he came running; his father rushed towards him, took him in his arms, and pressed him to his heart. "Yes!" I feel it," cried he, "thou art mine! What a gift of Heaven have I to thank my friends for! Whence, or how comest thou, my child, at this important moment?"

"Ask not," said the Abbé. "Hail to thee, young man! Thy Apprenticeship is done; Nature has pronounced thee free."

WILHELM MEISTER'S
APPRENTICESHIP.

BOOK VIII.

WILHELM MEISTER.

CHAPTER I.

FELIX skipped into the garden; Wilhelm followed him with rapture: a lovely morning was displaying every thing with fresh charms; our friend enjoyed the most delightful moment. Felix was new in the free and lordly world; nor did his father know much more than he about the objects, concerning which the little creature was repeatedly and unweariedly inquiring. At last they joined the gardener, whom they made to tell the names and uses of a multitude of plants. Wilhelm looked on Nature as with unscaled eyes; the child's newfangled curiosity first made him sensible how weak an interest he himself had taken in external things, how small his actual knowledge was. Not till this day, the happiest of his life, did his own cultivation seem to have commenced: he felt the necessity of learning, being called upon to teach.

Jarno and the Abbé did not show themselves

again, till evening, when they brought a guest along with them. Wilhelm viewed the stranger with amazement; he could scarce believe his eyes: it was Werner; who likewise, for a moment, hesitated in his recognition. They embraced each other tenderly; neither of them could conceal that he thought the other greatly altered. Werner declared that his friend was taller, stronger, straighter; that he had become more polished in his looks and carriage. "Something of his old true-heartedness, I miss, however," added he. "That too will soon appear again," said Wilhelm, "when we are recovered from our first astonishment."

The impression Werner made upon Wilhelm was not by any means so favourable. The honest man seemed rather to have retrograded than advanced. He was much leaner than of old, his peaked face appeared to have grown sharper, his nose longer; his brow and crown had lost their hair: his voice, clear, keen, shrill; his hollow breast, and stooping shoulders; his sallow cheeks announced indubitably that a melancholic drudge was there.

Wilhelm was discreet enough to speak but sparingly of these great changes; while the other, on the contrary, gave free course to his friendly joy. "In truth," cried he, "if thou hast spent thy time badly, and, as I suppose, gained nothing, it must be owned that thou art grown a

piece of manhood that canst not fail to make thy fortune. Do not waste and squander this at least: with such a figure thou shalt buy some rich and beautiful heiress." "I see," said Wilhelm smiling, "thou wilt not belie thy character. Scarcely hast thou found thy brother after long absence, when thou lookest on him as a piece of goods, a thing to speculate on, and make profit by."

Jarno and the Abbé did not seem at all astonished at this recognition; they allowed the two to expatiate on the past and present as they pleased. Werner walked round and round his friend; turned him to this side and to that; so as almost to embarrass him. "No!" cried he, "such a thing as this I never met with, and yet I know that I am not mistaken. Thy eyes are deeper, thy brow is broader; thy nose has grown finer, thy mouth more lovely. Do but look at him, how he stands; how all suits and fits together! Well, idling is the way to grow. But for me, poor devil," said he, looking at himself in the glass, "if I had not all this while been making store of money, it were over with me altogether."

Werner had got his friend's last letter: the distant trading house, in common with which Lothario meant to purchase the estates, was theirs. On that business Werner had come hither, never dreaming that he should meet with Wilhelm on

the way. The Baron's lawyer came ; the papers were produced ; Werner reckoned the conditions reasonable. " If you mean well," said he, " as you seem to do, with this young man, you will of yourselves take care that our part be not abridged: it shall be at my friend's option whether he will take the land, and lay out a portion of his fortune on it." Jarno and the Abbé protested that they did not need this admonition. Scarcely had the business been discussed in general terms, when Werner signified a longing for a game at ombre ; to which, in consequence, Jarno and the Abbé set themselves along with him. He was now grown so accustomed to it, that he could not pass the evening without cards.

The two friends, after supper, being left alone, began to talk, and question one another very keenly, touching every thing they wished to have communicated. Wilhelm spoke in high terms of his situation, of his happiness in being received among such men. Werner shook his head and said : " Well, I see, we should believe nothing that we do not see with our eyes. More than one obliging friend assured me thou wert living with a wild young nobleman, wert supplying him with actresses, helping him to waste his money ; that, by thy means, he had quarrelled with every one of his relations." " For my own sake, and the sake of these worthy gentlemen, I should be vexed at this," said Wilhelm, " had not my theatrical

experience made me tolerant to every sort of calumny. How can men judge rightly of our actions, which appear but singly or in fragments to them; of which they see the smallest part; while good and bad takes place in secret, and for most part nothing comes to light but an indifferent show. Are not the actors and actresses in a play set up on boards before them; lamps are lit on every side; the whole transaction is comprised within three hours; yet scarcely one of them knows rightly what to make of it."

Our friend proceeded to inquire about his family, his young comrades, his native town. Werner told, with great haste, of changes that had taken place, of changes that were still in progress. "The women in our house," said he, "are satisfied and happy; we are never short of money. One-half of their time they spend in dressing; the other in showing themselves when dressed. They are as domestic as a reasonable man could wish. My boys are growing up to prudent youths. I already, as in vision, see them sitting, writing, reckoning, running, trading, trucking: each of them, as soon as possible, shall have a business of his own. As to what concerns our fortune, thou wilt be contented with the state of it. When we have got these lands in order, thou must come directly home with me; for it now appears as if thou too couldst mingle with some skill in worldly undertakings. Thanks to thy

new friends, who have set thee on the proper path. I am certainly a fool : I never knew till now how well I liked thee, now when I cannot gape and gaze at thee enough, so well and handsomely thou lookest. That is in truth another form than the portrait which was sent thy sister ; and which occasioned such disputes at home. Both mother and daughter thought young master very handsome indeed, with his slack collar, half-open breast, large ruff, sleek pendent hair, round hat, short waistcoat, and wide pantaloons ; while I, on the other hand, maintained that the costume was scarce two finger-breadths from that of Harlequin. But now thou lookest like a man ; only the cue is wanting, in which I beg of thee to bind thy hair ; else some time or other, they will seize thee as a Jew, and demand toll and tribute of thee."

Felix in the meantime had come into the room ; and as they did not mind him, he had laid himself upon the sofa, and was fallen asleep. " What urchin is this ?" said Werner. Wilhelm at that moment had not the heart to tell the truth ; nor did he wish to lay a still ambiguous narrative before a man, who was by nature any thing but credulous.

The whole party now proceeded to the lands, to view them, and conclude the bargain. Wilhelm would not part with Felix from his side ; for the boy's sake, he rejoiced exceedingly in the intended

purchase. The longing of the child for cherries and berries, the season for which was at hand, brought to his mind the days of his own youth, and the manifold duties of a father to prepare, to procure, and to maintain for his family a constant series of enjoyments. With what interest he viewed the nurseries and the buildings! How keenly he contemplated repairing what had been neglected, restoring what had fallen! He no longer looked upon the world with the eyes of a bird of passage: an edifice he did not now consider as a grove that is hastily put together, and that withers ere one leaves it. Every thing that he proposed commencing was to be completed for his boy; every thing that he erected was to last for several generations. In this sense, his apprenticeship was ended: with the feeling of a father, he had acquired all the virtues of a citizen. He felt this, and nothing could exceed his joy. "O! needless strictness of morality!" exclaimed he, "while Nature in her own kindly manner trains us to all that we require to be. O! strange demands of civil society, which first perplexes and misleads us, then asks of us more than Nature herself! Woe to every sort of culture which destroys the most effectual means of all true culture, and directs us to the end, instead of rendering us happy on the way!"

Much as he had seen already in his life, it seemed as if the observation of the child afforded him

his first clear view of human nature. The theatre, the world had appeared before him, only as a multitude of thrown dice, every one of which upon its upper surface indicates a greater or a smaller value ; and which, when reckoned up together, make a sum. But here in the person of the boy, as we might say, a single die was laid before him, on the many sides of which the worth and worthlessness of man's nature were legibly engraved.

The child's desire to have distinctions made in his ideas grew stronger every day. Having learned that things had names, he wished to hear the name of every thing : supposing that there could be nothing which his father did not know, he often teased him with his questions, and caused him to inquire concerning objects, which but for this he would have passed unheeded. Our innate tendency to pry into the origin and end of things was likewise soon developed in the boy. When he asked whence came the wind, and whither went the flame, his father for the first time truly felt the limitation of his own powers, and wished to understand how far man may venture with his thoughts, and what things he may hope ever to give account of to himself or others. The anger of the child, when he saw injustice done to any living thing, was extremely grateful to the father, as the symptom of a generous heart. Felix once struck fiercely at the cook for cutting up some pigeons. The fine impression this produced on Wilhelm was, indeed,

ere long disturbed, when he found the boy unmercifully tearing sparrows in pieces and beating frogs to death. This trait reminded him of many men, who appear so scrupulously just, when without passion, and witnessing the proceedings of other men.

The pleasant feeling, that the boy was producing so fine and wholesome an influence on his being, was in a short time troubled for a moment, when our friend observed, that in truth the boy was educating him more than he the boy. The child's conduct he was not enabled to correct : its mind he could not guide in any path but a spontaneous one. The evil habits, which Aurelia had so violently striven against, had all, as it seemed, on her death, assumed their ancient privileges. Felix still never shut the door behind him, he still would not eat from a plate ; and no greater pleasure could befall him than when he happened to be overlooked, and could take his bit immediately from the dish, or let the full glass stand, and drink out of the bottle. He delighted also very much when he could set himself in a corner with a book, and say with a serious air : " I must study this scholar stuff ! " though he neither knew his letters nor would learn them.

Thus, when Wilhelm thought how little he had done for Felix, how little he was capable of doing, there at times arose a restlessness within him,

which appeared to counterbalance all his happiness. "Are we men then," said he, "so selfishly formed that we cannot possibly take proper charge of any one without us? Am I not acting with the boy, exactly as I did with Mignon? I drew the dear child towards me; her presence gave me pleasure; yet I cruelly neglected her. What did I do for her education, which she longed for with such earnestness? Nothing! I left her to herself and to all the accidents, to which in a society of coarse people she could be exposed. And now for this boy, who seemed so interesting ere he could be precious to thee, has thy heart ever bid thee do the smallest service to him? It is time that thou shouldst cease to waste thy own years and those of others: awake, and think what thou shouldst do for thyself, and for this good being, whom love and nature have so firmly bound to thee."

This soliloquy was but an introduction to admit that he had already thought, and cared, and tried, and chosen: he could delay no longer to confess it. After sorrow, often and in vain repeated, for the loss of Mariana, he distinctly felt that he must seek a mother for the boy; and also that he could not find one equal to Theresa. With this gifted lady he was thoroughly acquainted. Such a spouse and helpmate seemed the only one, to whom a reasonable person could implicitly intrust himself and those dear to him. Her generous affection for Lothario did not make him hesitate. By a singular

destiny, they two had been for ever parted; Theresa looked upon herself as free; she had talked of marrying, with indifference indeed, but as of a matter understood.

After long deliberation, he determined on communicating to her every thing he knew about himself. She was to be made acquainted with him, as he already was with her. He accordingly began to take a survey of his history: but it seemed to him so empty of events, and in general so little to his credit, that he more than once was on the point of giving up his purpose. At last, however, he resolved on asking Jarno for the Roll of his Apprenticeship, which he had noticed lying in the tower: Jarno said it was the very time for this, and Wilhelm consequently got it.

It is a feeling of awe and fear, which seizes on a man of noble mind, when conscious that his character is just about to be exhibited before him. Every transition is a crisis; and a crisis presupposes sickness. With what reluctance do we look into the glass after rising from a sick-bed! The recovery we feel: the effects of the past disease are all we see. Wilhelm had, however, been sufficiently prepared; events had already spoken loudly to him, and his friends had not spared him. If he opened up the roll of parchment with some hurry, he grew calmer and calmer the farther he read. He found his life delineated with large sharp strokes; neither unconnected incidents, nor

narrow sentiments perplexed his view ; the most bland and general reflections taught without ashaming him. For the first time, his own figure was presented to him ; not, indeed, as in a mirror, a second self ; but, as in a portrait, another self : we do not, it is true, recognise ourselves in every feature ; but we are delighted that a thinking spirit has so understood us, that such gifts have been employed in representing us, that an image of what we were exists and may endure when we ourselves are gone.

Wilhelm next employed himself in setting forth the history of his life for the perusal of Theresa : all the circumstances of it were recalled to memory by what he had been reading ; he almost felt ashamed that, to her great virtues, he had nothing to oppose, which indicated a judicious activity. He had been minute in his written narrative ; he was brief in the letter which he sent along with it. He solicited her friendship, her love, if it were possible ; he offered her his hand, and entreated for a quick decision.

After some internal contest whether it was proper to impart this weighty business to his friends, to Jarno and the Abbé, he determined not to do so. His resolution was so firm, the business was of such importance, that he could not have submitted it to the decision of the wisest and best of men. He was even cautious enough to carry his letter, with his own hand, to the nearest post. From his

parchment roll it appeared with certainty enough that, in very many actions of his life, in which he had conceived himself to be proceeding freely and in secret, he had been observed, nay guided; and perhaps the thought of this had given him an unpleasant feeling; and he wished at least in speaking to Theresa's heart, to speak purely from the heart; to owe his fate to her decision and determination only. Hence in this solemn point, he scrupled not to give his overseers the slip.

CHAPTER II.

SCARCELY was the letter gone, when Lothario returned. Every one was gladdened at the prospect of so speedily concluding the important business which they had in hand: Wilhelm waited with anxiety to see how all these many threads were to be loosed, or tied anew, and how his own future state was to be settled. Lothario gave a kindly salutation to them all: he was quite recovered and serene; he had the air of one who knows what he should do, and who finds no hindrance in the way of doing it.

His cordial greeting Wilhelm scarcely could repay. "This," he had to own within himself, "is the friend, the lover, bridegroom of Theresa; in his stead thou art presuming to intrude. Dost thou think it possible for thee to banish, to obliterate an impression such as this?" Had the letter not been sent away, perhaps he would not have ventured sending it at all. But happily the die was cast: it might be, Theresa had already taken up her resolution, and only distance shrowded with its veil a happy termination. The winning or the

losing must be soon decided. By such considerations, he endeavoured to compose himself; and yet the movements of his heart were almost feverish. He could scarcely give the least attention to the weighty business, on which in some degree the fate of all his property depended. In passionate moments, how trivial do we reckon all that is about us, all that belongs to us!

Happily for him, Lothario treated the affair with magnanimity, and Werner with an air of ease. The latter in his violent desire of gain experienced a lively pleasure, in contemplating the fine estate which was to be his friend's. Lothario for his part seemed to be revolving very different thoughts. "It is not the acquirement of property," said he, "that gives me pleasure; it is the justness of its acquirement."

"And, in the name of Heaven!" cried Werner, "is not this of ours acquired justly?"

"Not altogether," said Lothario.

"Are we not giving hard cash for it?"

"That we are," replied Lothario; "and most probably you will consider what I am at present hinting at as nothing but a whim. No property appears to me quite just, quite free of flaw, but what contributes to the state its due proportion."

"How!" said Werner: "You would rather that our lands, which we have purchased free from burden, had been taxable?"

"Yes," replied Lothario, "in a suitable de-

gree. It is only by this equality with every other kind of property, that our possession of it can be made secure. In these times of innovation, when so many old ideas are tottering to their fall, what is the grand occasion of the peasant's reckoning the possessions of the noble less securely founded than his own? Simply that the former is not burdened, and lies a burden upon him."

"But how would the interest of our capital agree with this?" said Werner.

"Perfectly well," returned the other; "if the state, for a regular and fair contribution, would relieve us from the feudal hocus-pocus; would allow us to proceed with our lands according to our pleasure; so that we were not compelled to retain such masses of them undivided, so that we might part them more equally among our children, whom we thus might introduce to vigorous and free activity; instead of leaving them the poor inheritance of these our limited and limiting privileges, to enjoy which we must ever be invoking the spirits of our fathers. How much happier were men and women in our rank of life, if they might with unforbidden eyes look round them, and elevate by their selection, here a worthy maiden, there a worthy youth, regarding nothing farther than their own ideas of happiness in marriage! The state would have more, perhaps better citizens, and would not so often be distressed for want of heads and hands."

“ I can assure you honestly,” said Werner, “ that I never in my life once thought about the state : my taxes, tolls, and tributes, I have paid, because it was the custom.”

“ Still, however,” said Lothario, “ I hope to make a worthy patriot of you. As he alone is a good father, who at table serves his children first, so is he alone a good citizen, who, before all other outlays, discharges what he owes the state.”

By such general reflections their special business was accelerated rather than retarded. It was nearly over, when Lothario said to Wilhelm : “ I must send you to a place where you are needed more than here. My sister bids me beg of you to go to her as soon as possible. Poor Mignon seems to be decaying more and more ; and it is thought your presence might allay the malady. Besides telling me in person, my sister has despatched this note after me ; so that you perceive she reckons it a pressing case.” Lothario handed him a billet. Wilhelm, who had listened in extreme perplexity, at once discovered in these hasty pencil-strokes the hand of the Countess, and knew not what to answer.

“ Take Felix with you,” said Lothario : “ the little ones will cheer each other. You must be upon the road to-morrow morning early ; my sister’s coach, in which my people travelled hither, is still here ; I will give you horses half the way ; the rest you post. A prosperous journey to you !

Make many compliments from me, when you arrive; tell my sister, I shall soon be back, and that she must prepare for guests. Our grand-uncle's friend, the Marchese Cipriani, is on his way to visit us: he hoped to find the old man still in life; they meant to entertain each other with their common love of art, and with the recollection of their early intimacy. The Marchese, much younger than my uncle, owed to him the greater part of his accomplishment. We must exert our whole endeavours, in some measure, to fill up the void which is awaiting him; and a larger party is the readiest means."

Lothario went with the Abbé to his chamber; Jarno had ridden off before; Wilhelm hastened to his room. There was none to whom he could unbosom his distress; none by whose assistance he could turn aside the project, which he viewed with so much fear. The little servant came, requesting him to pack: they meant to put the luggage on to-night, and leave the place by daybreak. Wilhelm knew not what to do; at length he cried: "Well, I shall leave the house at any rate; on the road I may consider what is to be done; at all events I will halt in the middle of my journey; I can send a message hither, I can write what I recoil from saying; then let come of it what will." In spite of this resolve, he spent a sleepless night: a look on Felix resting so serenely was the only thing that gave him any solace. "O! who knows,"

cried he, "what trials are before me; who knows how sharply bygone errors will yet punish me; how often good and reasonable projects for the future shall miscarry! But this treasure, which I call my own, continue it to me, thou exorable or inexorable Fate! Were it possible that this best part of myself were taken from me, that this heart could be torn from my heart, then farewell sense and understanding; farewell all care and foresight; vanish thou tendency to perseverance! All that distinguishes us from the beasts, pass away! And if it is not lawful for a man to end his heavy days by the act of his own hand, may speedy madness banish consciousness, before Death, which destroys it for ever, shall bring on his long night."

He seized the boy in his arms, kissed him, clasped him, and wetted him with plenteous tears.

The child awoke: his clear eye, his friendly look, touched his father to the inmost heart. "What a scene awaits me," cried he, "when I shall present thee to the beautiful unhappy Countess, when she shall press thee to her bosom, which thy father has so deeply injured! Ought I not to fear that she will push thee from her with a cry, when the touch of thee renews her real or fancied pain!" The coachman did not leave him time for farther thought or hesitation; but forced him into the carriage before day. Wilhelm wrapped his Felix well; the morning was cold but clear; the child, for the first time in his life, saw

the sun rise. His astonishment at the first fiery glance of the luminary, at the growing power of the light; his pleasure and his strange remarks rejoiced the father, and afforded him a glimpse into the heart of the boy, before which, as over a pure and silent sea, the sun was mounting and hovering.

In a little town, the coachman halted; unyoked his horses, and rode back. Wilhelm took possession of a room, and asked himself seriously whether he would stay or proceed. Thus irresolute he ventured to take out the little note, which hitherto he had never had the heart to look on: it contained the following words: "Send thy young friend very soon; Mignon for the last two days has been growing rather worse. Sad as the occasion is, I shall be happy to get acquainted with him."

The concluding words Wilhelm at the first glance had not seen. He was terrified on reading them, and instantly determined not to go. "How?" cried he, "Lothario, knowing what occurred between us, has not told her who I am? She is not with a settled mind expecting an acquaintance, whom she rather would not see: she expects a stranger; and I enter! I see her shudder and start back, I see her blush! No! it is impossible for me to encounter such a scene!" Just then his horses were led out and yoked: Wilhelm was determined to take off his luggage

and remain. He felt extremely agitated. Hearing the maid running up stairs to tell him, as he thought, that all was ready, he began on the spur of the instant to devise some pretext for continuing; his eyes were fixed, without attention, on the letter which he still held in his hand. "In the name of Heaven!" cried he, "what is this? It is not the hand of the Countess, it is the hand of the Amazon!"

The maid came in; requested him to walk down, and took Felix with her. "Is it possible," exclaimed he, "is it true? What shall I do? Remain, and wait, and certify myself? Or hasten, hasten and rush into an explanation? Thou art on the way to her, and thou canst loiter? This night thou mayst see her, and thou wilt voluntarily lock thyself in prison? It is her hand; yes, it is hers! This hand calls thee; her coach is yoked to lead thee to her! Now the riddle is explained: Lothario has two sisters: my relation to the one he knows; how much I owe the other, is unknown to him. Nor is she aware that the wounded stroller, who stands indebted to her for his health, if not his life, has been received with such unmerited attention in her brother's house."

Felix, who was swinging to and fro in the coach, cried up to him: "Father! Come, O come! Look at the pretty clouds, the pretty colours!" "Yes, I come," cried Wilhelm springing down the stair; and all the glories of the

sky, which thou, good creature, so admirest, are as nothing to the moment which I look for."

Sitting in the coach he recalled all the circumstances of the matter to his memory. So this is the Natalia, then, Theresa's friend! What a discovery, what hopes, what prospects! How strange that the fear of hearing aught said about the one sister should have altogether hid from me the being of the other!" With what joy he looked on Felix! He anticipated for the boy, as for himself, the best reception.

Evening at last came on; the sun had set; the road was not the best; the postilion drove slowly; Felix had fallen asleep, and new cares and doubts arose in the bosom of our friend. "What delusion, what fantasies are these that rule thee!" said he to himself: "An uncertain similarity of handwriting has at once assured thee, and given thee matter for the strangest castles in the air." He again brought out the paper; in the departing light, he again imagined that he recognised the hand of the Countess: his eyes could no longer find in the parts what his heart had at once shown him in the whole: "These horses, then, are running with thee to a scene of terror! Who knows but in a few hours they may have to bring thee back again? And if thou shouldst meet with her alone! But perhaps her husband will be there; perhaps the Baroness! How altered will she be! Shall I not fail at sight of her?"

Yet a faint hope that it might be his Amazon, would often gleam through these gloomy thoughts. It was now night : the carriage rolled into a courtyard, and halted ; a servant with a link stepped out of a stately portal, and came down the broad steps to the carriage-door. " You have been long looked for," said he, opening it. Wilhelm dismounted ; took the sleeping Felix in his arms : the first servant called to a second, who was standing in the door with a light : " Show the gentleman up to the Baroness."

Quick as lightning, it went through Wilhelm's soul : " What a happiness ! Be it by accident, or of purpose, the Baroness is here ! I shall see her first ; apparently the Countess is retired to rest. Ye good spirits, grant that the moment of deepest perplexity may pass tolerably over !"

He entered the house : he found himself in the most earnest, and, as he almost felt, the holiest place, which he had ever trod. A pendent dazzling lustre threw its light upon a broad and softly rising stair, which lay before him, and which parted into two divisions at a turn above. Marble statues and busts were standing upon pedestals, and arranged in niches : some of them seemed known to him. The impressions of our childhood abide with us, even in their minutest traces. He recognised a Muse, which had formerly belonged to his grandfather ; not indeed by its form or worth, but by an arm which had been

restored, and some new-inserted pieces of the robe. He felt as if a fairy tale had turned out to be true. The child was heavy in his arms; he lingered on the stair, and knelt down, as if to place him more conveniently. His real want, however, was to get a moment's breathing time. He could scarcely raise himself again. The servant, who was carrying the light, offered to take Felix; but Wilhelm could not part with him. He had now mounted to an antechamber; in which, to his still greater astonishment, he observed the well-known picture of the sick king's son hanging on the wall. He had scarcely time to cast a look on it; the servant hurried him along through two rooms into a cabinet. Here, behind a light-screen, which threw a shadow on her, sat a young lady reading, "O that it were she!" said he within himself at this decisive moment. He set down the boy, who seemed to be awakening; he meant to approach the lady; but the child sank together drunk with sleep, the lady rose, and came to him. It was the Amazon! Unable to restrain himself, he fell upon his knee, and cried: "It is she!" He seized her hand, and kissed it with unbounded rapture. The child was lying on the carpet between them, sleeping softly.

Felix was carried to the sofa: Natalia sat down beside him; she directed Wilhelm to the chair which was standing nearest them. She proposed

to order some refreshments ; these our friend declined ; he was altogether occupied convincing himself that it was she, closely examining her features, shaded by the screen, and accurately recognising them. ✕ She told him of Mignon's sickness in general terms ; that the poor child was gradually consuming under the influence of a few deep feelings ; that, with her extreme excitability, and her endeavouring to hide it, her little heart often suffered violent and dangerous pains ; that on any unexpected agitation of her mind, this primary organ of life would suddenly stop, and no trace of the vital movement could be felt in the good child's bosom. That when such an agonizing cramp was past, the force of nature would again express itself in strong pulses, and now torment the child by its excess, as she formerly had suffered by its defect.

Wilhelm recollected one spasmodic scene of that description, and Natalia referred him to the Doctor, who would speak with him at large on the affair, and explain more circumstantially why he, the friend and benefactor of the child, had been at present sent for. " One curious change," Natalia added, " you will find in her : she now wears women's clothes, at which she used to testify so great a horror."

" How did you succeed in this ?" said Wilhelm.

" If it was indeed a thing to be desired," said she, " we owe it all to chance. Hear how it hap-

pened. Perhaps you are aware that I have constantly about me a number of little girls, whose opening minds I endeavour, as they grow in strength, to train to what is good and right. From my mouth, they learn nothing but ~~what~~ what I myself regard as true : yet I cannot and would not hinder them from gathering, among other people, many fragments of the common prejudices and errors which are current in the world. If they inquire of me about them, I attempt, as far as possible, to join these alien and intrusive notions to some just one, and thus to render them, if not useful, at least harmless. Some time ago, my girls had heard among the peasants' children many tales of angels, of Knecht Rupert, and such shadowy characters, who, it was maintained, appeared at certain times in person to give presents to good children, and to punish naughty ones. They had an idea that these strange visitants were people in disguise : in this I confirmed them ; and without entering into explanations, I determined, on the first opportunity, to let them see a spectacle of that sort. It chanced that the birth-day of two twin-sisters, whose behaviour had been always very good, was near ; I promised that, on this occasion, the little present, which they had so well deserved, should be delivered to ~~them~~ by an angel. They were on the stretch of curiosity regarding this phenomenon. I had chosen Mignon for the part ; and accordingly, at the appointed day, I had her

suitably adorned in a long light snow-white dress. She was, of course, provided with a golden girdle round her waist, and a similar diadem upon her hair. At first I purposed to omit the wings ; but the young ladies, who were decking her, insisted on a pair of large golden pinions, in preparing which they meant to show their highest art. Thus did the strange apparition, with a lily in the one hand, and a little basket in the other, glide in among the girls : she surprised even me. ‘ There comes the angel !’ said I. The children all shrank back ; at last they cried : ‘ It is Mignon !’ yet they durst not venture to approach the wondrous figure.

‘ Here are your gifts,’ said she, putting down the basket. They gathered around her, they viewed, they felt, they questioned her.

‘ Art thou an angel ?’ asked one of them.

‘ I wish I were,’ said Mignon.

‘ Why dost thou bear a lily ?’

‘ So pure and so open should my heart be ; then were I happy.’

‘ What wings are these ? Let us see them !’

‘ They represent far finer ones, which are not yet unfolded.’

“ And thus significantly did she answer all their other childlike, innocent inquiries. The little party having satisfied their curiosity, and the impression of the show beginning to abate, we were for proceeding to undress the little angel. This, however, she resisted : she took her cithern ;

she seated herself here on this high writing-desk,
and sang a little song with touching grace :

Such let me seem, till such I be ;
Take not my snow-white dress away !
Soon from the dreary earth I flee
Up to the glittering lands of day.

There first a little space I'll rest,
Then ope my eyes, with joyful mind ;
In robes of lawn no longer drest,
This girdle and this garland left behind.

And those calm shining Sons of Morn
They ask not touching maid or boy ;
No robes, no garments there are worn,
The frame is purged from sin's alloy.

Through life, 'tis true, I have not toil'd,
Yet anguish long my heart has wrung,
Untimely woe my cheek has spoil'd :
Make me again forever young !

“ I immediately determined upon leaving her the dress,” proceeded Natalia ; “ and procuring her some others of a similar kind. These she now wears, and in them, as it appears to me, her form has quite a different expression.”

As it was already late, Natalia let the stranger go : he parted from her not without anxiety. “ Is she married or not ? ” asked he within himself. He had been afraid, at every rustling, that the

door would open, and her husband enter. The serving-man, who showed him to his room, went off, before our friend had mustered resolution to inquire regarding this. His unrest held him long awake; he kept comparing the figure of the Amazon with the figure of his new acquaintance. The two would not combine: the former he had as it were himself fashioned; the latter seemed as if it almost meant to fashion *him*.

CHAPTER III.

NEXT morning, while all was yet in quiet, he went to view the house. It was the purest, finest, stateliest piece of architecture he had ever seen. "True art," cried he, "is like good company : it constrains us in the most delightful way to recognise the measure, by which and up to which our inward nature has been shaped by culture." The impression which the busts and statues of his grandfather made upon him was exceedingly agreeable. With a longing mind, he hastened to the picture of the sick king's son ; and he still felt it to be charming and affecting. The servant opened to him various other chambers : he found a library, a museum, a cabinet of philosophical instruments. In much of this, he could not help perceiving his extreme ignorance. Meanwhile Felix had awoke, and come running after him. The thought of how and when he might receive Theresa's letter gave him pain ; he dreaded seeing Mignon, and in some degree Natalia. How unlike his present state was his state at the moment, when he sealed the letter to Theresa ; and with a

glad heart, wholly gave himself to that noble being !

Natalia sent for him to breakfast. He proceeded to a room, in which several tidy little girls, all apparently below ten years, were occupied in furnishing a table, while another of the same appearance brought in various sorts of beverage.

Wilhelm cast his eye upon a picture, hung above the sofa ; he was forced to recognise in it the portrait of Natalia, little as the execution satisfied him. Natalia entered, and the likeness seemed entirely to vanish. To his comfort he perceived the cross of a religious order represented on its breast ; and he saw another such upon the breast of Natalia.

“ I have just been looking at the portrait here,” said he ; “ and it seems surprising that a painter could at once have been so true and so false. The picture resembles you in general extremely well, and yet it neither has your features nor your character.”

“ It is rather matter of surprise,” replied Natalia, “ that the likeness is so good. It is not my picture ; but the picture of an aunt, whom I resembled even in childhood, though she was then advanced in years. It was painted when her age was just about what mine is : at the first glance every one imagines it is meant for me. You should have been acquainted with that excellent lady. I owe her much. A very weak state of

health, perhaps too much employment with her own thoughts, and withal a moral and religious scrupulosity prevented her from being to the world what, in other circumstances, she might have become. She was a light that shone but on a few friends, and on me especially."

"Can it be possible," said Wilhelm, after thinking for a moment, while so many circumstances seemed to correspond so accurately, "can it be possible that the fair and noble Saint, whose meek Confessions I had liberty to study, was your aunt?"

"You read the manuscript?" inquired Natalia.

"Yes," said Wilhelm, "with the greatest sympathy, and not without effect upon my life. What most impressed me in this paper was, if I may term it so, the purity of being, not only of the writer herself, but of all that lay around her; that self-dependence of nature, that impossibility of admitting any thing into her soul which would not harmonize with its own noble lovely tone."

"You are more tolerant to this fine spirit," said Natalia, "nay I will say more just, than many other men, to whom the narrative has been imparted. Every cultivated person knows how keenly he has to contend against a certain rudeness both in others and himself; how much his culture costs him; how apt he after all, in certain cases, is to recollect himself alone, forgetting what he owes to others. How often has a worthy person to re-

proach himself for having failed to act with proper delicacy ! And when a fair nature too delicately, too conscientiously, cultivates, nay, if you will, overcultivates itself, there seems to be no toleration, no indulgence for it in the world. Yet such persons are, without us, what the ideal of perfection is within us ; models not for being imitated, but for being aimed at. We laugh at the cleanliness of the Dutch : but were our friend Theresa what she is, if some such notion were not always present to her in her housekeeping ?”

“ I see before me then,” cried Wilhelm, “ in Theresa’s friend the same Natalia, whom her amiable relative was so attached to ; the Natalia, who from her youth was so affectionate, so sympathizing and helpful ! It was only out of such a line that such a being could proceed. What a prospect opens up before me, while I at once survey your ancestors, and all the circle you belong to !”

“ Yes,” replied Natalia, “ in a certain sense, the story of my aunt would give you the most faithful picture of us. Her love to me, indeed, has made her praise the little girl excessively : in speaking of a child, we never speak of what is present, but of what we hope for.”

Wilhelm in the meantime was rapidly reflecting that Lothario’s parentage and early youth was now likewise known to him. The fair Countess too appeared before him in her childhood, with the aunt’s pearls about her neck : he himself had been

near those pearls, when her soft lovely lips bent down to meet his own. These beautiful remembrances he sought to drive away by other thoughts. He ran through the characters to whom that manuscript had introduced him. "I am here then," cried he, "in your worthy uncle's house! It is no house, it is a temple, and you are the priestess, nay the Genius of it: I shall recollect for life my impression yesternight, when I entered, and the old figures of my earliest days were again before me. I thought of the compassionate figures of marble in Mignon's song: but these figures had not to lament about me; they looked upon me with a lofty earnestness, they brought my first years into immediate contact with the present moment. That ancient treasure of our family, the joy of my grandfather, I find here placed among so many other noble works of art; and myself, whom nature made the darling of the good old man, my unworthy self I find here also, Heavens! in what society, in what connexions with it!"

The girls had by degrees gone out, to mind their little occupations. Natalia, left alone with Wilhelm, asked some farther explanation of his last remark. The discovery, that a number of her finest paintings and statues had at one time been the property of Wilhelm's grandfather, did not fail to give a cheerful stimulus to their discourse. As by that manuscript he had got acquainted with Natalia's house, so now he found himself too, as it

were, in his inheritance. At length he asked for Mignon. His friend desired him to have patience till the Doctor, who had been called out into the neighbourhood, returned. It is easy to suppose that the Doctor was the same little active man, whom we already know, and who was spoken of in the Confessions of a Fair Saint.

“ Since I am now,” said Wilhelm, “ in the middle of your family circle, I presume the Abbé whom that paper mentions, is the strange inexplicable person, whom, after the most singular series of events, I met with in your brother’s house? Perhaps you can give some more accurate conception of him?”

“ Of the Abbé there might much be said,” replied Natalia : “ what I know best about him is the influence which he exerted on our education. He was, for a time at least, convinced that education ought in every case to be adapted to the inclinations : his present views of it I know not. He maintained that with man the first and last consideration was activity, and that we could not act on any thing, without the proper gifts for it, without the instinct which impelled us to it. ‘ You admit,’ he used to say, ‘ that poets must be born such ; you admit this with regard to all professors of the fine arts ; because you must admit it, because those workings of human nature can scarce be aped with any plausibility. But if we consider strictly, we shall find that every capability, however

slight, is born with us ; that there is no vague general capability in men. It is our ambiguous dissipating education that makes men uncertain : it awakens wishes when it should be animating tendencies ; instead of forwarding our real capacities, it turns our efforts towards objects which are frequently discordant with the mind that aims at them. I augur better of a child, a youth who are wandering astray along a path of their own, than of many who are walking rightly upon paths which are not theirs. If the former, either by themselves or by the guidance of others, ever find the right path, that is to say, the path which suits their nature, they will never leave it ; while the latter are in danger every moment of shaking off a foreign yoke, and abandoning themselves to unrestricted license.’ ”

“ It is strange,” said Wilhelm,” that this same extraordinary man should have likewise taken charge of me ; should, as it seems, have, in his own fashion, if not led, at least confirmed me in my errors, for a time. How he will answer to the charge of having joined with others, as it were, to make a mock of me, I am waiting patiently to see.”

“ Of this whim, if it is one,” said Natalia, “ I have little reason to complain : of all the family I answered best with it. Indeed I see not how Lothario could have got a finer breeding : but for my sister, the Countess, some other treatment might have been more suitable ; perhaps they

should have studied to infuse more earnestness and strength into her nature. As to brother Friedrich, what is to become of him at present cannot be conjectured: he will fall a sacrifice I fear to this experiment in pedagogy."

"You have another brother then?" cried Wilhelm.

"Yes," replied Natalia: "and a light merry youth he is; and as they have not hindered him from roaming up and down the world, I know not what the wild dissipated boy will turn to. It is a great while since I saw him. The only thing which calms my fears is, that the Abbé, and the whole society about my brother, are receiving constant notice where he is and what he does."

Wilhelm was about to ask Natalia her opinion more precisely on the Abbé's paradoxes, as well as to solicit information from her touching that mysterious society; but the Physician entering changed their conversation. After the first compliments of welcome, he began to speak of Mignon.

Natalia then took Felix by the hand, saying she would lead the child to Mignon, and prepare her for the entrance of her friend.

The Doctor, now alone with Wilhelm, thus proceeded: "I have wondrous things to tell you; such as you are not anticipating. Natalia has retired, that we might speak with greater liberty of certain matters, which, although I learned them by her means at first, her presence would prevent us

from discussing freely. The strange temper of the child seems to consist almost exclusively of deep longing; the desire of revisiting her native land, and the desire for you, my friend, are, I might almost say, the only earthly things about her. Both these feelings do but grasp towards an immeasurable distance, both objects lie before her unattainable. The neighbourhood of Milan seems to be her home: in very early childhood, she was kidnapped from her parents by a company of rope-dancers. A more distinct account we cannot get from her, partly because she was then too young to recollect the names of men and places; but especially because she has made an oath to tell no living mortal her abode and parentage. For the strolling party, who came up with her when she had lost her way, and to whom she so accurately described her dwelling, with such piercing entreaties to conduct her home, but carried her along with them so much the faster; and at night in their quarters, when they thought the child was sleeping, joked about their precious capture, declaring she would never find the way home again. On this a horrid desperation fell upon the miserable creature; but at last the Holy Virgin rose before her eyes, and promised that she would assist her. The child then swore within herself a sacred oath, that she would henceforth trust no human creature, would disclose her history to no one, but live and die in hope of im-

mediate aid from Heaven. Even this, which I am telling you, Natalia did not learn expressly from her; but gathered from detached expressions, songs, and childlike inadvertencies, betraying what they meant to hide."

Wilhelm called to memory many a song, and word of this dear child, which he could now explain. He earnestly requested the Physician to keep from him none of the confessions or mysterious poetry of this peculiar being.

"Prepare yourself," said the Physician, "for a strange confession; for a story with which you, without remembering it, have much to do; and which, as I greatly fear, has been decisive for the death and life of this good creature."

"Let me hear," said Wilhelm, "my impatience is unbounded."

"Do you recollect a secret nightly visit from a female," said the Doctor, "after your appearance in the character of Hamlet?"

"Yes, I recollect it well," cried Wilhelm blushing, "but I did not look to be reminded of it at the present moment."

"Do you know who it was?"

"I do not! You frighten me! In the name of Heaven, not Mignon sure? Who was it? tell me pray."

"I know it not myself."

"Not Mignon then?"

"No, certainly not Mignon: but Mignon was

intending at the time to glide in to you ; and saw, with horror, from a corner where she lay concealed, a rival get before her."

" A rival !" cried our friend : " Speak on, you are confounding me entirely."

" Be thankful," said the Doctor, " that you can arrive at the result so soon through means of me. Natalia and I, with but a distant interest in the matter, had distress enough to undergo, before we could thus far discover the perplexed condition of the poor dear creature, whom we wished to help. By some wanton speeches of Philina and the other girls, by a certain song which she had heard the former sing, the child's attention had been roused ; she longed to pass a night beside the man she loved, without conceiving any thing to be implied in this beyond a happy and confident rest. A love for you, my friend, was already keen and powerful in her little heart ; in your arms, the child had found repose from many a sorrow ; she now desired this happiness in all its fulness. At one time she proposed to ask you for it in a friendly manner ; but a secret horror always held her back. At last that merry night and the excitement of abundant wine inspired her with the courage to attempt the venture, and glide in to you on that occasion. Accordingly she ran before, to hide herself in your apartment, which was standing open ; but just when she had reached the top of the stair, having heard a rust-

ling, she concealed herself, and saw a female in a white dress slip into your chamber. You yourself arrived soon after, and she heard you push the large bolt.

“ Mignon’s agony was now unutterable: all the violent feelings of a passionate jealousy mingled with the unacknowledged longing of obscure desire, and seized her half-developed nature with tremendous force. Her heart, that hitherto had beaten violently with eagerness and expectation, now at once began to falter and stop; it pressed her bosom like a heap of lead; she could not draw her breath, she knew not what to do; she heard the sound of the old man’s harp, hastened to the garret where he was, and passed the night at his feet in horrible convulsions.”

The Physician paused a moment; then, as Wilhelm still kept silence, he proceeded: “ Natalia told me nothing in her life had so alarmed and touched her as the state of Mignon while relating this: indeed, our noble friend accused herself of cruelty in having by her questions and her management drawn this confession from her, and renewed by recollection the violent sorrows of the poor little girl.

“ ‘ The dear creature,’ said Natalia, ‘ had scarcely come so far with her recital, or rather with her answers to my questions, when she sank at once before me on the ground, and with her hand upon

her bosom piteously complained of the returning pain of that excruciating night. She twisted herself like a worm upon the floor, and I was forced to summon my composure that I might remember and apply such means of remedy for mind and body as were known to me.’”

“It is a painful predicament you put me in,” cried Wilhelm, “by impressing me so keenly with the feeling of my manifold injustice towards this unhappy and beloved being, at the very moment when I am again to meet with her. If she is to see me, why do you deprive me of the courage to appear with freedom? And shall I confess it to you? Since her mind is so affected, I perceive not how my presence can be advantageous to her. If you, as a Physician, are persuaded that this double longing has so undermined her being as to threaten death, why should I renew her sorrows by my presence, and perhaps accelerate her end?”

“My friend,” replied the Doctor, “where we cannot cure it is our duty to alleviate; and how much the presence of a loved object tends to take from the imagination its destructive power, how it changes an impetuous longing to a peaceful looking, I could demonstrate by the most convincing instances. Every thing in moderation and with judgment! For, in other cases, this same presence may rekindle an affection nigh extinguished. But do you go and see the child;

behave to her with kindness, and let us wait the consequence."

Natalia, at this moment coming back, bade Wilhelm follow her to Mignon. "She appears to feel quite happy with the boy," observed Natalia, "and I hope she will receive our friend with mildness." Wilhelm followed not without reluctance: he was deeply moved by what he had been hearing; he feared a stormy scene of passion. It was altogether the reverse that happened on his entrance.

Mignon, dressed in long white women's clothes, with her brown copious hair partly knotted, partly clustering out in locks, was sitting with the boy Felix on her lap, and pressing him against her heart. She looked like a departed spirit, he like life itself: it seemed as if Heaven and Earth were clasping one another. She held out her hand to Wilhelm with a smile, and said: "I thank thee for bringing back the child to me: they had taken him away, I know not how, and since then I could not live. So long as my heart needs any thing on earth, thy Felix shall fill up the void."

The quietness, which Mignon had displayed on meeting with her friend, produced no little satisfaction in the party. The Doctor signified that Wilhelm should go frequently and see her; that in body as in mind, she should be kept as equable as possible. He himself departed, having promised in a short time to return.

Our friend could now observe Natalia in her circle: one would have desired nothing better than to live beside her. Her presence had the purest influence on the girls and young ladies of various ages, who resided with her in the house, or came to pay her visits from the neighbourhood.

“The progress of your life,” said Wilhelm once to her, “must always have been very even: your aunt’s delineation of you in your childhood, seems, if I mistake not, still to fit. It is easy to perceive, that you never were entangled in your path. You have never been compelled to retrograde a single step.”

“For this, I am indebted to my uncle and the Abbé,” said Natalia, “who discriminated my prevailing turn of mind so well. From my youth upwards, I can scarcely recollect a lively feeling, but that I was constantly observing people’s wants, and that I always had an irresistible desire to make them up. The child which had not learned to stand upon its feet, the old man that could no longer stand on his; the longing of a rich family for children, the inability of a poor one to maintain their offspring; each silent wish for some employment, the impulse towards any talent, the natural gifts for many little necessary arts of life, were sure to strike me: my eye seemed formed by nature for detecting them. I saw such things, where no one had directed my attention: I seem-

ed born for seeing them alone. The charms of inanimate nature, to which so many persons are exceedingly susceptible, had no effect on me; the charms of art if possible had less. My most delightful occupation was and is, when a deficiency, a want appeared before me anywhere, to set about devising a supply, a remedy, a help for it.

“ If I saw a poor creature in rags, the superfluous clothes which I had noticed hanging in the wardrobes of my friends immediately occurred to me; if I saw any children wasting for the want of care and nursing, I was sure to recollect some lady, whom I had observed oppressed with tedium in the midst of riches and conveniences; if I saw too many persons crammed into a narrow space, I thought they should be quartered in the spacious chambers of palaces and vacant houses. This mode of viewing things was altogether natural, without the least reflection; so that in my childhood I often made the strangest work of it, and more than once embarrassed people by my singular proposals. Another of my specialties was this, I did not learn till late, and after many efforts, to consider money as a mean of satisfying wants: my benefits were all distributed in kind, and my simplicity, I know, was frequently the cause of laughter. None but the Abbé seemed to understand me; he met me everywhere; he made

me acquainted with myself, with these wishes, these tendencies, and taught me how to satisfy them suitably."

"Do you then," said Wilhelm, "in the education of your little female world employ the method of these extraordinary men? Do you too leave every mind to form itself? Do you too leave your girls to search and wander, to pursue delusions, happily to reach the goal, or miserably lose themselves in error?"

"No!" replied Natalia: "such treatment as that would altogether contradict my sentiments. To my mind, he who does not help us at the needful moment, never helps; he who does not counsel at the needful moment, never counsels. I also reckon it essential that we lay down and continually impress on children certain laws, to operate as a kind of hold in life. Nay, I could almost venture to assert that it is better to be wrong by rule, than to be wrong with nothing but the fitful caprices of our disposition to impel us hither and thither: and in my way of viewing men, there always seems to be a void in their nature, which cannot be filled up, except by some decisive and distinctly settled law."

"Your manner of proceeding then," said Wilhelm, "is entirely different from the manner of our friends?"

"Yes," replied Natalia: "and you may see

the unexampled tolerance of these men from the fact, that they nowise disturb me in my practice ; but leave me on my own path, simply because it is my own, and even assist me in every thing that I require of them."

A more minute description of Natalia's plans in managing her children we reserve for some other opportunity.

Mignon often asked to be of their society ; and this they granted her with greater readiness, as she appeared to be again accustoming herself to Wilhelm, to be opening up her heart to him, and in general to have become more cheerful and contented with existence. In walking, being easily fatigued, she liked to hang upon his arm. "Mignon," she would say, "now climbs and bounds no more; yet she still longs to mount the summits of the hills, to skip from house to house, from tree to tree. How enviable are the birds! How pretty and socially they build their nests!"

Ere long it grew habitual for the little patient to invite her friend more than once every day into the garden. When Wilhelm was engaged or absent, Felix had to occupy his place; and if poor Mignon seemed at times quite loosened from the earth, there were other moments when she would again hold fast to father and son, and

seem to dread a separation from them more than any thing beside.

Natalia wore a thoughtful look. "We meant," said she, "to open up her tender little heart, by sending for you hither. I know not whether we did prudently." She stopped, and seemed expecting Wilhelm to say something. To him also it occurred that by his marriage with Theresa, Mignon, in the present circumstances, would be fearfully offended: but in his uncertainty, he did not venture mentioning his project; he had no suspicion that Natalia knew of it.

As little could he talk with freedom, when his noble friend began to speak about her sister; to praise her good qualities, and to lament her hapless situation. He felt exceedingly embarrassed when Natalia told him he would shortly see the Countess here. "Her husband," she observed, "has now no other object but replacing Zinzendorf in the community; and by his penetration and activity supporting and extending the departed Count's establishment. He is coming with his wife to take a sort of leave: he then proposes visiting the various spots where the Community have settled. They appear to treat him as he wishes: and I should not wonder if, in order to be altogether like his predecessor, he should venture, with my sister, on a voyage to America; for being already almost

certain that a little more would make a saint of him, the wish to superadd to this the dignity of martyrdom most probably has often floated through his soul."

CHAPTER IV.

THEY had often spoken of Theresa, often mentioned her in passing ; and Wilhelm almost every time was minded to confess that he had offered her his heart and hand. A certain feeling, which he was not able to explain, restrained him ; he paused and wavered, till at length Natalia, with the heavenly, modest, cheerful smile she often wore, said to him : “ It seems then I at last must break silence, and force myself into your confidence ! Why, my friend, do you keep secret from me an affair of such importance to yourself, and so closely touching my concerns ? You have made my friend the offer of your hand : I do not mix uncalled in the transaction : here are my credentials ; here is the letter which she writes to you, which she sends you through my hands.”

“ A letter from Theresa ! ” cried he.

“ Yes, Mein Herr ! Your destiny is settled ; you are happy. Let me congratulate my friend and you on your good fortune.”

Wilhelm spoke not, but gazed out before him. Natalia looked at him ; she saw that he was pale. “ Your joy is strong,” continued she ; “ it takes

the form of terror, it deprives you of the power to speak. My participation is not the less cordial that I show it you in words. I hope you will be grateful : for I may say my influence on the decision of your bride has not been small ; she asked me for advice ; and as it happened by a singular coincidence, that you were here just then, I was enabled to destroy the few scruples which my friend still entertained. Our messages went swiftly to and fro : here is her determination ; here is the conclusion of the treaty ! And now you shall read her other letters, you shall have a free clear look into the fair heart of your Theresa."

Wilhelm opened up the letter, which she handed him unsealed. It contained these friendly words :

" I am yours, as I am and as you know me. I call you mine, as you are and as I know you. What in ourselves, what in our connexion wedlock changes, we shall study to adjust by reason, cheerfulness, and mutual good-will. As it is no passion, but trust and inclination for each other that is leading us together, we run a smaller risk than multitudes of others. You will pardon me, I know, when I at times bestow a cordial thought upon my former friend ; in return for this, I will press your Felix to my heart, as if I were his mother. If you like to share my little mansion with me, it is fully in our power ; meanwhile the purchase of your land might be concluded. I could wish that no new arrangements were made in it

without me. I could wish at once to prove that I deserve the confidence which you repose in me. Adieu, dear, dear Friend ! Beloved Bridegroom, honoured Husband ! Theresa clasps you to her breast with hope and joy. My friend will tell you more, will tell you all."

Wilhelm, to whose mind this sheet recalled the image of Theresa with the liveliest distinctness, had again recovered his composure. While reading, thoughts had rapidly alternated within his soul. With terror he discovered in his heart the most vivid traces of an inclination to Natalia: he blamed himself, declaring every thought of that description to be madness; he represented to himself Theresa in her whole perfection; he again perused the letter, he grew cheerful, or rather he so far regained his self-possession that he could appear cheerful. Natalia handed him the letters which had passed between Theresa and herself: out of Theresa's we propose extracting one or two passages.

After delineating her bridegroom in her own peculiar way, Theresa thus proceeded :

"Such is the conception I have formed of the man who now offers me his hand. What he thinks about himself thou shalt see by and by; in the papers he has sent me I feel persuaded that I should be happy with him."

"As to rank, thou knowest my ideas on this

point long ago. Some people look on disagreement of external circumstances as a fearful thing, and cannot remedy it. I wish not to persuade any one, I wish to act according to my own persuasion. I mean not to set others an example, nor do I act without example. It is interior disagreements only that affright me; a frame that does not fit what it is meant to hold; much pomp and little real enjoyment; wealth and avarice, nobility and rudeness, youth and pedantry, poverty and ceremonies, these are the things which would annihilate me, however it may please the world to stamp and rate them."

"If I hope that we shall suit each other, the hope is chiefly founded upon this, that he resembles thee, my dear Natalia, thee whom I prize and reverence so highly. Yes, he has thy noble searching and striving for the Better, whereby we of ourselves produce the Good, which we suppose we find. How often have I blamed thee, not in silence, for treating this or that person for acting in this or that case, otherwise than I should have done; and yet in general the issue showed that thou wert in the right. 'When we take people,' thou wouldst say, 'merely as they are, we make them worse; when we treat them as if they were what they should be, we improve them as far as they can be improved.' To see or to act thus, I know full well is not for me. Skill, order, dis-

cipline, direction, this is my affair. I always recollect what Jarno said : ‘Theresa trains her pupils, Natalia forms them.’ Nay once he went so far as to assert that of the three fair qualities, faith, love, and hope, I was entirely destitute. ‘Instead of faith,’ said he, ‘she has penetration, instead of love she has steadfastness, instead of hope she has trust.’ Indeed I will confess that till I knew thee, I knew nothing higher in the world than clearness and prudence : it was thy presence only that persuaded, animated, conquered me ; to thy fair lofty soul I willingly give place. My friend too I honour on the same principle : the description of his life is a perpetual seeking without finding ; not empty seeking, but extraordinary, generous seeking ; he conceives that others may give him what can proceed from himself alone. So, love, the clearness of my vision has not injured me on this occasion more than others : I know my husband better than he knows himself, and I value him so much the more. I see him, yet I see not over him : all my skill will not enable me to judge of what he can accomplish. When I think of him, his image always blends itself with thine : I know not how I have deserved to belong to two such persons. But I will deserve it, by endeavouring to do my duty, by fulfilling what is looked for from me.”

“ If I recollect of Lothario ? Vividly and daily.

In the company which in thought surrounds me, I cannot want him for a moment. O ! what a pity for this noble character, related by an error of his youth to me, that nature has related him to thee ! A being such as thou, in truth, were worthier of him than I. To thee I could, I would surrender him. Let us be to him all we can, till he find a proper wife ; and then too let us be, let us abide together."

" But what shall we say to our friends ?" began Natalia.—" Your brother does not know of it ?"—" Not a hint ; your people know as little ; we women have on this occasion managed the affair ourselves. Lydia had put some whims into Theresa's head, concerning Jarno and the Abbé. There are certain plans and secret combinations, with the general scheme of which I am acquainted, and into which I never thought of penetrating farther. With regard to these, Theresa has, through Lydia, taken up some shadow of suspicion : so in this decisive step, she would not suffer any one but me to influence her. With my brother it had been already settled, that they merely should announce their marriages to one another, not giving or asking counsel on the subject."

Natalia wrote a letter to her brother ; she invited Wilhelm to subjoin a word or two, Theresa having so desired it. They were just about to

seal, when Jarno unexpectedly sent up his name. His reception was of course as kind as possible : he wore a sportful merry air ; he could not long forbear to tell his errand. “ I am come,” said he, “ to give you very curious and very pleasing tidings : they concern Theresa. You have often blamed us, fair Natalia, for troubling our heads about so many things ; but now you see how good it is to have one’s spies in every place. Guess, and let us see your skill for once !”

The self-complacency with which he spoke these words, the roguish mien with which he looked at Wilhelm and Natalia, persuaded both of them that he had found their secret. Natalia answered smiling ; “ We are far more skilful than you think ; before we even heard your riddle, we had put the answer to it down in black and white.”

With these words, she handed him the letter to Lothario ; satisfied at having met with such success the little triumph and surprise, which he had meant for them. Jarno took the sheet with some astonishment ; ran it quickly over ; started, let it drop from his hands, and stared at both his friends with an expression of amazement, nay of fright, which on his countenance was rare. He spoke no word.

Wilhelm and Natalia were not a little struck ; Jarno stepped up and down the room. “ What shall I say ?” cried he : “ Or shall I say it at all ? But it must come out, the perplexity is not to be

avoided. So secret for secret ! Surprise against surprise ! Theresa is not the daughter of her reputed mother ! The hindrance is removed : I came to ask you to prepare her for a marriage with Lothario."

Jarno saw the shock which he had given his friends ; they cast their eyes upon the ground. " The present case," said he, " is one of those, which are worse to bear in company. What each has to consider in it he considers best in solitude : I at least require an hour of leave." He hastened to the garden ; Wilhelm followed him mechanically, yet without approaching near.

At the end of an hour, they were again assembled. Wilhelm opened up the conversation : " Formerly," said he, " while I was living without plan or object, in a state of carelessness, or I may say of levity, friendship, love, affection, trust came towards me with open arms, they pressed themselves upon me : but now when I am serious, destiny appears to take another course with me. This resolution of soliciting Theresa's hand is probably the first, which has proceeded altogether from myself. I laid my plan considerately ; my reason fully joined in it ; by the consent of that noble maiden all my hopes were crowned. But now the strangest fate puts back my outstretched hand ; Theresa reaches hers to me, but from afar, as in a dream ; I cannot grasp it ; and the lovely image leaves me for ever. So fare thee well, thou

lovely image ! and all ye images of richest happiness which gathered round it !”

He was silent for a moment, looking out before him : Jarno was about to speak. “ Let me have another word,” cried Wilhelm, “ for the lot is drawing which is to decide the destiny of all my life. At this moment, I am aided and confirmed by the impression, which Lothario’s presence made upon me at the first glance, and which has ever since continued with me. That man well merits every sort of friendship and affection ; and without sacrifices friendship cannot be imagined. For his sake, it was easy for me to delude a hapless girl ; for his sake it shall be possible for me to give away the worthiest bride. Return, relate the strange occurrence to him, and tell him what I am prepared for.”

“ In emergencies like this,” said Jarno, “ I hold that every thing is done, if one do nothing rashly. Let us take no step until Lothario has agreed to it. I will go to him : wait patiently for my return, or for his letter.”

He rode away ; and left his friends in great disquiet. They had time to reconsider these events, and think of them maturely. It now first occurred to them, that they had taken Jarno’s statement simply and without inquiring into any of the circumstances. Wilhelm was not altogether free from doubts : but next day, their astonishment, nay their bewilderment, arose still higher, when a

messenger arriving from Theresa, brought the following letter to Natalia.

“ Strange as it may seem, after all the letters I have sent, I am forced to send another, begging that thou wouldst despatch my bridegroom to me instantly. He shall be my husband, what plans soever they may lay to rob me of him. Give him the enclosed letter ; only not before witnesses, whoever they may be !”

The enclosed letter was as follows : “ What opinion will you form of your Theresa, when you see her all at once insisting passionately on a union, which calm reason alone appeared to have appointed ? Let nothing hinder you from setting out the moment you have read the letter. Come, my dear, dear friend ; now three times dearer, since they are attempting to deprive me of you.”

“ What is to be done ?” cried Wilhelm, after he had read the letter.

“ In no case that I remember,” said Natalia, after some reflection, “ have my heart and judgment been so dumb as in the present one : what to do or to advise I know not.”

“ Can it be,” cried Wilhelm vehemently, “ that Lothario does not know of it ; or if he does, that he is but like us, the sport of hidden plans ? Has Jarno, when he saw our letter, on the spot devised the fable ? Would he have told us something different, if we had not been so precipitate ? What can they mean ? What intentions can they have ?

What plan can Theresa mean? Yes, it must be owned, Lothario is begirt with secret influences and combinations: I myself have found that they are active, that they take a certain charge of the proceedings, of the destiny of several people, and contrive to guide them. The ulterior objects of these mysteries I know not; but their nearest purpose, that of snatching my Theresa from me, I perceive but too distinctly. On the one hand, this prospect of Lothario's happiness which they exhibit to me may be but a hollow show; on the other hand, I see my dear, my honoured bride inviting me to her affection. What shall I do? What shall I forbear?"

"A little patience!" said Natalia; "a little time for thought! In these singular perplexities, I know but this, that what can never be recalled should not be done in haste. To a fable, to an artful plan we have steadfastness and prudence to oppose: whether Jarno has been speaking true or false must soon appear. If my brother actually has hopes of a connexion with Theresa, it were hard to cut him off forever from that prospect at the very moment when it seems inviting him most kindly. Let us wait at least till we discover whether he himself knows aught of it, whether he believes and hopes."

These prudent counsels were confirmed by a letter from Lothario. "I do not send Jarno," he wrote: "a line from my hand is more to thee than

the minutest narrative in the mouth of a messenger. I am certain that Theresa is not the daughter of her reputed mother : and I cannot renounce the hope of being hers, till she too is persuaded, and can then decide between my friend and me with calm consideration. Let him not leave thee, I entreat it ! The happiness, the life of a brother is at stake. I promise thee this uncertainty shall not be long."

" You see how the matter stands," said she to Wilhelm with a friendly air : " give me your word of honour that you will not leave the house !"

" I give it !" cried he, stretching out his hand : " I will not leave this house against your will. I thank Heaven, and my better Genius, that on this occasion I am led, and led by you."

Natalia wrote Theresa an account of every thing ; declaring that she would not let her friend away. She sent Lothario's letter also.

Theresa answered : " I wonder not a little that Lothario is himself convinced : to his sister he would not feign to this extent. I am vexed, greatly vexed. It is better that I say no more. But I will come to thee, so soon as I have got poor Lydia settled : they are treating her cruelly. I fear we are all betrayed, and shall be so betrayed that we shall never reach the truth. If my friend were of my opinion, he would give thee the slip after all, and throw himself into the arms of his

Theresa, whom none shall take away from him. But I, as I dread, shall lose him, and not regain Lothario. From the latter they are taking Lydia, by showing him afar off the prospect of obtaining me. I will say no more : the entanglement will grow still deeper. Whether, in the mean time, these beautiful relations to each other may not be so pushed aside, so undermined, and broken down, that when the darkness passes off the mischief may no longer be remediable, time will show. If my friend do not tear himself away, in a few days I myself will come to seek him out beside thee, and to hold him fast. Thou marvellest how this passion can have gained the mastery of thy Theresa. It is no passion, but conviction ; it is a belief that since Lothario never can be mine, this new friend will make me happy. Tell him this in the name of the little boy, that sat with him beneath the oak, and thanked him for his sympathy. Tell him this in the name of Theresa, who met his offers with a hearty openness. My first dream of living with Lothario has wandered far away from my soul ; the dream of living with my other friend is yet wholly present to me. Do they hold me so lightly, as to think that it were easy to exchange the former with the latter ?”

“ I depend on you,” Natalia said to Wilhelm, handing him the letter : “ you will not leave me. Consider that the comfort of my life is in your hands. My being is so intimately bound and in-

terwoven with the being of my brother, that he feels no sorrow which I do not feel, no joy which does not likewise gladden me. Nay I may truly say, through him alone I have experienced that the heart can be affected and exalted ; that in the world there may be joy, love, and an emotion, which contents the soul beyond its utmost want."

She stopped ; Wilhelm took her hand, and cried : " O continue ! This is the time for a true mutual disclosure of our thoughts : it never was more necessary for us to be well acquainted with each other."

" Yes, my friend !" said she, smiling, with her quiet, soft, indescribable dignity : " perhaps it is not out of season, if I tell you that the whole of what so many books, of what the world holds up to us and names love, has always seemed to me an utter fable."

" You have never loved ?" cried Wilhelm.

" Never or always !" said Natalia.

CHAPTER V.

DURING this conversation, they kept walking up and down the garden, and Natalia gathered various flowers of singular forms, entirely unknown to Wilhelm, who began to ask their names, and occupy himself about them.

“ You know not,” said Natalia, “ for whom I have been plucking these? I intend them for my uncle, whom we are to visit. The sun is shining even now so bright upon the Hall of the Past, I must lead you in this moment; and I never go to it, without a few of the flowers which my uncle liked particularly in my hand. He was a peculiar man, susceptible of very strange impressions. For certain plants and animals, for certain neighbourhoods and persons, nay for certain sorts of minerals, he had an especial love which he was rarely able to explain. ‘ Had I not,’ he would often say, ‘ from youth, withstood myself, not striven to form my judgment upon wide and general principles, I had been the narrowest and most intolerable person living. For nothing can be more intolerable than circumscribed peculiarity in one, from whom

a pure and suitable activity might be required.' And yet he was obliged to own, that life and breath would almost leave him, if he did not now and then indulge himself, not from time to time allow himself a brief and passionate enjoyment of what he could not always praise and justify. 'It is not my fault,' said he, 'if I have not brought my inclinations and my reason into perfect harmony.' On such occasions, he would joke with me, and say: 'Natalia may be looked upon as happy while she lives: her nature asks for nothing, which the world does not wish and use.'"

So speaking, they arrived again at the house. Natalia led him through a spacious passage, to a door, before which lay two granite Sphinxes. The door itself was in the Egyptian fashion, somewhat narrower above than below; and its brazen leaves prepared one for a serious or even a gloomy feeling. Wilhelm was in consequence agreeably surprised, when his expectation issued in a sentiment of pure cheerful serenity, as he entered a hall, where art and life took away all recollection of death and the grave. In the walls all round, a series of proportionable arches had been hollowed out, and large sarcophaguses stood in them: among the pillars in the intervals between them, smaller openings might be seen, adorned with urns and similar vessels. The remaining spaces of the walls and vaulted roof were regularly divided;

and between bright and variegated borders, within garlands and other ornaments, a multitude of cheerful and significant figures had been painted, upon grounds of different sizes. The body of the edifice was covered with that fine yellow marble, which passes into reddish; clear blue stripes of a chemical substance happily imitating azure-stone, while they satisfied the eye with contrast, gave unity and combination to the whole. All this pomp and decoration showed itself in the chastest architectural forms: and thus every one who entered felt as if exalted above himself, while the co-operating products of art, for the first time, taught him what man is and what he may become.

Opposite the door, on a stately sarcophagus, lay a marble figure of a noble-looking man, reclined upon a pillow. He held a roll before him; and seemed to look at it with still attention. It was placed so that you could read with ease the words which stood there: *Think of living.*

Natalia took away a withered bunch of flowers, and laid the fresh one down before the figure of her uncle. For it was her uncle whom the marble represented: Wilhelm thought he recognised the features of the venerable gentleman, whom he had seen, when lying wounded in the green of the forest. "Here he and I passed many an hour," said Natalia, "while the hall was getting ready. In his latter years, he had gathered several skilful

artists round him; and his chief delight was to invent or superintend the drawings and cartoons for these pictures."

Wilhelm could not satisfy himself with looking at the objects which surrounded him. "What a life," exclaimed he, "in this Hall of the Past! One might with equal justice name it the Hall of the Present and the Future. Such all were, such all will be. There is nothing transitory but the individual who looks at and enjoys it. Here, this figure of the mother pressing her infant to her bosom will survive many generations of happy mothers. Centuries hence, perhaps some father will take pleasure in contemplating this bearded man, who has laid aside his seriousness, and is playing with his son. Thus shamefaced will the bride sit for ages, and amid her silent wishes, need that she be comforted; that she be spoken to; thus impatient will the bridegroom listen on the threshold whether he may enter."

The figures Wilhelm was surveying with such rapture were of almost boundless number and variety. From the first jocund impulse of the child, merely to employ its every limb in sport, up to the peaceful sequestered earnestness of the sage, you might, in fair and living order, see delineated how man possesses no capacity or tendency without employing and enjoying it. From the first soft conscious feeling, when the maiden lingers in pulling up her pitcher, and looks with

satisfaction at her image in the clear fountain, to those high solemnities when kings and nations invoke the Gods at the altar to witness their alliances, all was depicted, all was forcible and full of meaning.

It was a world, it was a heaven, that in this abode surrounded the spectator; and beside the thoughts which those polished forms suggested, beside the feelings they awoke, there still seemed something farther to be present, something by which the whole man felt himself laid hold of. Wilhelm too observed this, though unable to account for it. "What is this," exclaimed he, "which, independently of all signification, without any sympathy that human incidents and fortunes may inspire us with, acts on me so strongly and so gracefully? It speaks to me from the whole, it speaks from every part; though I have not fully understood the former, though I do not specially apply the latter to myself! What enchantment breathes from these surfaces, these lines, these heights and breadths, these masses and colours! What is it that makes these figures so delightful, even when slightly viewed, and merely in the light of decorations! Yes, I feel it: one might tarry here, might rest, might view the whole, and be happy; and yet feel and think something altogether different from aught that stood before his eyes."

And certainly if we were able to describe how

happily the whole was subdivided, how every thing determined by its place, by combination or by contrast, by uniformity or by variety, appeared exactly as it should have done, producing an effect as perfect as distinct, we should transport the reader to a scene, from which he would not be in haste to stir.

Four large marble candelabras rose in the corners of the hall; four smaller ones were in the midst of it, around a very beautifully worked sarcophagus, which, judging from its size, might once have held a young person of middle stature.

Natalia paused beside this monument; she laid a hand upon it as she said: "My worthy uncle had a great attachment to this fine antique. 'It is not,' he would often say, 'the first blossoms alone that drop; such you can keep above in these little spaces; but fruits also, which, hanging on their twigs, long give us the fairest hope, whilst a secret worm is preparing their too early ripeness and their quick decay.' I fear," continued she, "his words have been prophetic of that dear little girl, who seems withdrawing gradually from our cares, and bending to this peaceful dwelling."

As they were about to go, Natalia stopped and said: "There is something still which merits your attention. Observe these half-round openings aloft on both sides. Here the choir can

stand concealed while singing; these iron ornaments below the cornice serve for fastening on the tapestry, which, by the orders of my uncle, must be hung round at every burial. Music, particularly song, was a pleasure which he could not live without: and it was one of his peculiarities that he wished the singer not to be in view. ‘In this respect,’ he used to say, ‘they spoil us at the theatre; the music there is, as it were, subservient to the eye; it accompanies movements, not emotions. In oratorios and concerts, the form of the musician constantly disturbs us: true music is intended for the ear alone; a fine voice is the most universal thing that can be figured; and while the narrow individual that uses it presents himself before the eye, he cannot fail to trouble the effect of that pure universality. The person whom I am to speak with, I must see, because it is a solitary man, whose form and character gives worth or worthlessness to what he says: but, on the other hand, whoever sings to me must be invisible; his form must not confuse me or corrupt my judgment. Here it is but one human organ speaking to another; it is not spirit speaking to spirit, not a thousandfold world to the eye, not a heaven to the man.’ On the same principles regarding instrumental music, he required that the orchestra should as much as possible be hid; because by the mechanical exertions, by the mean and awkward gestures of the performers, our

feelings are so much dispersed and perplexed. Accordingly he always used to shut his eyes while hearing music; that so he might concentrate all his being on the single pure enjoyment of the ear."

They were just about to leave the Hall, when they heard the children running hastily along the passage, and Felix crying: "No, I! No, I!"

Mignon rushed in at the open door: she was foremost, but out of breath and could not speak a word. Felix, still at some distance, shouted out: "Mamma Theresa is come!" The children, as it seemed, had run a race to bring the news. Mignon was lying in Natalia's arms, her heart was beating fiercely.

"Naughty child," Natalia said, "art thou not forbidden violent motions? See how thy heart is beating!"

"Let it break!" said Mignon with a deep sigh: "it has beat too long."

They had scarce composed themselves from this surprise, this sort of consternation, when Theresa entered. She flew to Natalia; clasped her and Mignon in her arms. Then turning round to Wilhelm, she looked at him with her clear eyes, and said: "Well, my friend, how is it with you? You have not let them cheat you?" He made a step towards her; she sprang to him, and hung upon his neck. "O my Theresa!" cried he.

“ My friend, my love, my husband ! Yes, forever thine ! ” cried she amid the warmest kisses.

Felix pulled her by the gown, and cried : “ Mamma Theresa, I am here too ! ” Natalia stood and looked before her : Mignon, on a sudden clapped her left hand on her heart ; and stretching out the right arm violently, fell with a shriek at Natalia’s feet, as dead.

The fright was great : no motion of the heart or pulse was to be traced. Wilhelm took her on his arm, and hastily carried her away ; the body hung lax over his shoulders. The presence of the Doctor was of small avail : he and the young Surgeon, whom we know already, strove in vain. The dear little creature could not be recalled to life.

Natalia beckoned to Theresa : the latter took her friend by the hand and led him from the room. He was dumb, not uttering a word ; he durst not meet her eyes. He sat down with her upon the sofa, where he first had found Natalia. He thought with great rapidity along a series of fateful incidents, or rather he did not think, but let his soul be worked on by the thoughts which would not leave it. There are moments in life, when past events, like winged shuttles, dart to and fro before us, and by their incessant movements weave a web, which we ourselves, in a greater or a less degree, have spun and put upon the loom. “ My friend, my love ! ” said Theresa breaking

silence, as she took him by the hand: "Let us stand together firmly in this hour, as we perhaps shall often have to do in similar hours. These are occurrences, which it takes two united hearts to suffer. Think, my friend; feel that thou art not alone; show that thou lovest thy Theresa by imparting thy sorrows to her!" She embraced him, and drew him softly to her bosom: he clasped her in his arms and pressed her strongly towards him. "The poor child," cried he, "used in mournful moments to seek shelter and protection in my unstable bosom: let the stability of thine assist me in this heavy hour." They held each other fast; he felt her heart beat against his breast; but in his spirit all was desolate and void; only the figures of Mignon and Natalia flitted like shadows across the waste of his imagination.

Natalia entered. "Give us thy blessing!" cried Theresa: "Let us, in this melancholy moment, be united before thee!" Wilhelm had hid his face upon Theresa's neck: he was so far relieved that he could weep. He did not hear Natalia come; he did not see her; but at the sound of her voice his tears redoubled. "What God has joined I will not part," she answered smiling: "but to unite you is not in my power; nor am I gratified to see that sorrow and sympathy seem altogether to have banished from your hearts the recollection of my brother." At these words, Wilhelm started from Theresa's arms. "Whi-

ther are you going?" cried the ladies. "Let me see the child," said he, "which I have killed! Misfortune, when we look upon it with our eyes, is smaller than when our imagination sinks the evil down to the recesses of the soul. Let us view the departed angel! Her serene countenance will say to us that it is well with her." As his friends could not restrain the agitated youth, they followed him: but the worthy Doctor with the Surgeon met them and prevented them from coming near the dead. "Keep away from this mournful object," said he; "and allow me, so far as I am able, to give some continuance to these remains. On this dear and singular being, I will now display the beautiful art not only of embalming bodies, but of retaining in them a look of life. As I foresaw her death, the preparations are already made; with these helps I shall undoubtedly succeed. Give me but a few days, and ask not to see the child again till I have brought her to the Hall of the Past."

The young Surgeon had in his hands that well-known case of instruments. "From whom can he have got it?" Wilhelm asked the Doctor. "I know it very well," replied Natalia: "he has it from his father, who dressed your wounds, when we found you in the forest."

"Then I have not been mistaken! I recognised the band at once!" cried Wilhelm. "O get it for me! It was this which first gave me

any hint of my unknown benefactress. What weal and woe will such a thing survive ! Beside how many sorrows has this band already been, and its threads still hold together ! How many men's last moments has it witnessed, and its colours are not yet faded ! It was near me in one of the fairest hours of my existence, when I was lying wounded on the ground, and your helpful form appeared before me, and the child whom we are now lamenting, sat with its bloody hair, busied with the tenderest care to save my life !”

It was not long that our friends could talk about this sad occurrence ; that Theresa could inquire about the child, and the probable cause of its unexpected death : for strangers were announced, who, on making their appearance, proved to be well-known strangers. Lothario, Jarno, and the Abbé entered. Natalia met her brother : among the rest, there was a momentary silence. Theresa smiling on Lothario said : “ You scarcely looked to find me here ; at least it was not quite advisable that we should visit one another at the present time : however, after such an absence, take my cordial welcome.”

Lothario took her hand, and answered : “ If we are to suffer and renounce, it may as well take place in the presence of the object whom we love and wish for. I desire no influence on your determination ; my confidence in your heart, in your understanding, and clear sense, is still so great,

that I willingly commit to your disposal my fate and that of my friend."

The conversation turned immediately to general, nay we may say, to trivial topics. The company soon separated into single pairs for walking. Natalia was with her brother; Theresa with the Abbé; our friend was left with Jarno in the Castle.

The appearance of the guests at the moment when a heavy sorrow was oppressing Wilhelm, had, instead of dissipating his attention, irritated him, and made him worse: he was fretful and suspicious, and unable or uncareful to conceal it, when Jarno questioned him about his sulky silence. "What is the use of saying more?" cried Wilhelm. "Lothario with his helpers is arrived: and it were strange if those mysterious watchmen of the tower, who are constantly so busy, did not now exert their influence on us, to effect I know not what strange purpose. So far as I have known these saintly gentlemen, it seems to be in every case their laudable endeavour to separate what is united, and to unite what is separated. What sort of a web their weaving will produce, may probably to our unholy eyes forever be a riddle."

"You are cross and bitter," said the other; "that is as it should be. If you would get into a proper passion, it would be still better."

"That, too, may possibly enough occur," said Wilhelm: "I am very much afraid that some of

you are in the mind to load my patience, natural and acquired, beyond what it will bear."

"In the mean time," said the other, "till we see what *is* to be the issue of the matter, I could like to tell you somewhat of the tower, which you appear to view with such mistrust."

"It stands with you," said Wilhelm, "whether you will risk your eloquence on an attention so distracted. My mind is so engaged at present, that I know not whether I can take a proper interest in these very dignified adventures."

"Your pleasing humour shall not hinder me," said Jarno, "from explaining this affair to you. You reckon me a clever fellow; I want to make you reckon me an honest one; and what is more, on this occasion I am bidden speak." "I could wish," said Wilhelm, "that you did it of yourself, and with an honest purpose to inform me; but as I cannot hear without suspicion, wherefore should I hear at all?" "If I have nothing better to do," said Jarno, "than to tell you stories, you too have time to listen to me; and to this you may perhaps feel more inclined, when I assure you, that all you saw in the tower was but the relics of a youthful undertaking, in regard to which the greater part of the initiated were once in deep earnest, though all of them now view it with a smile."

"So with these pompous signs and words, you do but mock?" cried Wilhelm. "With a solemn

air, you lead us to a place inspiring reverence by its aspect ; you make the strangest visions pass before us ; you give us rolls full of glorious mystic apophthegms, of which in truth we understand but little ; you disclose to us, that hitherto we have been pupils ; you solemnly pronounce us free ; and we are just as wise as we were." " Have you not the parchment by you ?" said the other. " It contains a deal of sense : those general apophthegms were not picked up at random ; though they seem obscure and empty to a man without experiences to recollect while reading them. But give me the Indenture, as we call it, if it is at hand." " Quite at hand," cried Wilhelm, " such an amulet well merits being worn upon one's breast." " Well," said Jarno, smiling, " who knows whether the contents of it may not one day find a place in your head and heart."

He opened up the Roll, and glanced over the first half of it. " 'This," said he, " regards the cultivation of our gifts for art and science ; of which let others speak : the second treats of life ; here I am more at home."

He then began to read passages, speaking between whiles, and connecting them with his remarks and narrative. " The taste of youth for secrecy, for ceremonies, for imposing words, is extraordinary : and frequently bespeaks a certain depth of character. In those years, we wish to feel our whole nature seized and moved, even

though it be but vaguely and darkly. The youth, who happens to have lofty aspirations and forecastings, thinks that secrets yield him much, that he must depend much on secrets, and effect much by means of them. It was with such views that the Abbé favoured a certain Society of young men; partly according to his principle of aiding every tendency of nature, partly out of habit and inclination; for in former times he had himself been joined to an association, which appears to have accomplished many things in secret. For this business I was least of all adapted. I was older than the rest; from youth I had thought clearly; I wished in all things nothing more than clearness; I felt no interest in men, but to know them as they were. With the same taste, I gradually infected all the best of our associates; and this circumstance had almost given a false direction to our plan of culture. For we now began to look at nothing but the errors and the narrowness of others, and to think ourselves a set of highly-gifted personages. Here the Abbé came to our assistance: he taught us, that we never should inspect the conduct of men, unless we at the same time took an interest in improving it; and that through action only could we ever be in a condition to inspect and watch ourselves. He advised us, however, to retain the primary forms of the Society: hence there was still a sort of law in our proceedings; the first mystic impressions might

be traced in the constitution of the whole. At length, as by a practical similitude, it took the form of a corporate trade, whose business was the arts. Hence came the names of Apprentices, Assistants, and Masters. We wished to see with our own eyes, and to form for ourselves a special record of our own experience in the world. Hence those numerous confessions, which in part we wrote ourselves, in part made others write; and out of which the several *Apprenticeships* were afterwards compiled. The formation of his character is not the chief concern with every man. Many merely wish to find a sort of recipe for comfort, directions for acquiring riches, or whatever good they aim at. All such, when they would not be instructed in their proper duties, we were wont to mystify, to treat with juggleries, and every sort of hocus-pocus, and at length to shove aside. We advanced none to the rank of Masters, but such as clearly felt and recognised the purpose they were born for, and had got enough of practice to proceed along their way with a certain cheerfulness and ease."

"In my case, then," cried Wilhelm, "your ceremony has been very premature; for since the day when you pronounced me free, what I can, will, or shall do, has been more unknown to me than ever."—"We are not to blame for this perplexity; perhaps good fortune will deliver us. In the mean time listen: 'He in whom there is

much to be developed will be later in acquiring true perceptions of himself, and of the world. There are few who at once have Thought and the capacity of Action. Thought expands, but lames: Action animates, but narrows.’”

“ I beg of you,” cried Wilhelm, “ not to read me any more of this surprising stuff. These phrases have before sufficiently confused me.” “ I will stick by my story then,” said Jarno, half rolling up the parchment, into which, however, he kept casting frequent glances. “ I myself have been of less service to the cause of our Society and of my fellow-men, than any other member. I am but a bad schoolmaster; I cannot bear to look on people making awkward trials; when I see a person wandering from his path, I feel constrained to call to him, although it were a night-walker going straight to break his neck. On this point, I had a continual struggle with the Abbé, who maintains that error never can be cured except by erring. About you, too, we have often argued. He had taken an especial liking to you; and it is saying not a little for you to have caught so much of his attention. For me, you must admit, that every time we met, I told you just the naked truth.” “ Certainly, you spared me very little,” said the other, “ and I think you still continue faithful to your principles.” “ What is the use of sparing,” answered Jarno, “ when a young man of many good endowments is taking quite a false direction?”

“ Pardon me,” said Wilhelm, “ you have rigorously enough denied me any talent for the stage ; I confess to you, that though I have entirely renounced the art, I cannot think myself entirely incapable.” “ And with me,” said Jarno, “ it is well enough decided, that a person, who can only play himself, is no player. Whoever cannot change himself, in temper and in form, into many forms, does not deserve the name. Thus you, for example, acted Hamlet and some other characters extremely well ; because in these, your form, your disposition, and the temper of the moment suited. For an amateur theatre, for any one who saw no other way before him, this would perhaps have answered well enough. But,” continued Jarno, looking on the roll, “ we should guard against a talent, which we cannot hope to practise in perfection. Improve it as we may, we shall always in the end, when the merit of the master has become apparent to us, painfully lament the loss of time and strength devoted to such botching.’ ”

“ Do not read !” cried Wilhelm : “ I entreat you earnestly ; speak on, tell, inform me ! So the Abbé aided me in Hamlet ; he provided me a Ghost ?”—“ Yes ; for he asserted that it was the only way of curing you, if you were cureable.” “ And on this account he left the veil, and bade me fly ?”—“ Yes, he hoped that having fairly acted Hamlet, your desire of acting would be satiated. He maintained that you would never go upon the

stage again : I believed the contrary, and I was right. We argued on the subject, that very evening when the play was over." " You saw me act then ?" " I did indeed." " And who was it that played the Ghost ?" " That I cannot tell you ; either the Abbé or his twin brother ; but I think the latter, for he is a little taller." " You have secrets from each other then ?" " Friends may and must *have* secrets from each other ; but they *are* not secrets to each other."

" The very thought of that perplexity perplexes me. Let me understand the man, to whom I owe so many thanks as well as such reproaches."

" What gives him such a value in our estimation," answered Jarno, " what in some degree secures him the dominion over all of us, is the free sharp eye that nature has bestowed on him, for all the powers which dwell in man, and are susceptible of cultivation, each according to its kind. Most men, even the most accomplished, are but limited : each prizes certain properties in others and himself ; these alone he favours, these alone will he have cultivated. Directly the reverse is the procedure of our Abbé : for every gift he has a feeling ; every gift he takes delight to recognise and forward. But I must look again into my roll ! ' It is all men that make up mankind ; all powers taken together that make up the world. These are frequently at variance : and as they endeavour to destroy each other, Nature holds them together,

and again produces them. From the first animal tendency to handicraft attempts, up to the highest practising of intellectual art; from the inarticulate tones and crowings of the happy infant, up to the polished utterance of the orator and singer; from the first bickerings of boys up to the vast equipments by which countries are conquered and retained; from the slightest kindness and the most transitory love, up to the fiercest passion and the most earnest covenant; from the merest perception of sensible presence, up to the faintest presentiments and hopes of the remotest spiritual future; all this and much more also lies in man, and must be cultivated: yet not in one, but in many. Every gift is valuable, and ought to be unfolded. When one encourages the beautiful alone, and another encourages the useful alone, it takes them both to form a man. The useful encourages itself; for the multitude produce it, and no one can dispense with it: the beautiful must be encouraged; for few can set it forth, and many need it.’”

“ Hold! Hold!” cried Wilhelm: “ I have read it all.” “ Yet a line or two!” said Jarno: “ Here is our worthy Abbé to a hairsbreadth: ‘ One power rules another; none can cultivate another: in each endowment, and not elsewhere, lies the force which must complete it: this many people do not understand, who yet attempt to teach and influence.’” “ I too do not understand it,” answered Wilhelm. “ You will often hear the Abbé preach

on this text ; and, therefore, Let us merely keep a clear and steady eye on what is in ourselves ; on what endowments of our own we mean to cultivate : let us be just to others : for we ourselves are only to be valued, in so far as we can value.’ ”

“ For the sake of Heaven ! no more of these wise saws ! I feel them to be but a sorry balsam for a wounded heart. Tell me rather, with your cruel settledness, what you expect of me, how and in what manner you intend to sacrifice me.” “ For every such suspicion, I assure you, you will afterwards entreat our pardon. It is your affair to try and choose ; it is ours to aid you. A man is never happy till his vague striving has itself marked out its proper limitation. It is not to me that you must look, but to the Abbé : it is not of yourself that you must think, but of what surrounds you. Thus, for instance, learn to understand Lothario’s superiority ; how his quick and comprehensive vision is inseparably united with activity ; how he constantly advances ; how he expands his influence and carries every one along with him. Wherever he may be, he bears a world about with him : his presence animates and kindles. Observe our good Physician, on the other hand ! His nature seems to be directly the reverse. If the former only works upon the general whole, and at a distance, the latter turns his piercing eye upon the things that are beside him ; he rather furnishes the means for being active, than himself displays or

stimulates activity. His conduct is exactly like the conduct of a good domestic manager; he is busied silently, while he provides for each in his peculiar sphere; his knowledge is a constant gathering and expending, a taking in and giving out on the small scale. Perhaps Lothario in a single day might overturn what the other had for years been employed in building: but perhaps Lothario also might impart to others in a moment strength sufficient to restore a hundred fold what he had overturned." "It is but a sad employment," answered Wilhelm, "to contemplate the sublime advantages of others, at a moment when we are at variance with ourselves. Such contemplations suit the man at ease; not him whom passion and uncertainty are agitating." "Peacefully and reasonably to contemplate is at no time hurtful," answered Jarno: "and while we use ourselves to think of the advantages of others, our own mind comes insensibly to imitate them; and every false activity, to which our fancy was alluring us, is then willingly abandoned. Free your spirit, if you can, from all suspicion and anxiety. Here comes the Abbé: be courteous towards him, till you have learned still farther what you owe him. The rogue! There he goes between Natalia and Theresa; I could bet he is contriving something. As in general he likes to act the part of Destiny a little; so he does not fail to show a taste for making matches, when he finds an opportunity."

Wilhelm, whose angry and fretful humour all the placid prudent words of Jarno had not bettered, thought his friend exceedingly indelicate for mentioning marriage at a moment like the present; he answered with a smile indeed, but a rather bitter one: "I thought the taste for making matches had been left to those that had a taste for one another."

CHAPTER VI.

THE company had met again ; the conversation of our friends was necessarily interrupted. Ere long a courier was announced, as wishing to deliver with his own hand a letter to Lothario. The man was introduced : he had a vigorous sufficient look ; his livery was rich and handsome. Wilhelm thought he knew him : nor was he mistaken ; for it was the man whom he had sent to seek Philina and the fancied Mariana, and who never came again. Our friend was meaning to address him, when Lothario, who had read the letter, asked the courier with a serious, almost angry tone : “ What is your master’s name ? ”

“ Of all questions,” said the other with a prudent air, “ this is the one which I am least prepared to answer. I hope the letter will communicate the necessary information : verbally I have been charged with nothing.”

“ Be it as it will,” replied Lothario with a smile ; “ since your master puts such trust in me as to indite a letter so exceedingly facetious, he shall be welcome to us.” “ He will not keep you

long waiting for him," said the courier with a bow, and went away.

"Do but hear the foolish tasteless message," said Lothario. 'As of all guests, Good Humour is believed to be the most agreeable wherever he appears, and as I always keep that gentleman beside me by way of travelling companion, I feel persuaded that the visit I intend to pay your noble Lordship will not be taken ill; on the contrary, I hope the whole of your illustrious family will witness my arrival with complete satisfaction; and in due time also my departure; being always, *et cetera*, Count of Snailfoot.'

"'Tis a new family," said the Abbé.

"A vicariat count, perhaps," said Jarno.

"The secret is easy to unriddle," said Natalia: "I wager it is none but brother Friedrich, who has threatened us with a visit ever since my uncle's death."

"Right! fair and skilful sister!" cried a voice from the nearest thicket; and immediately a pleasant, cheerful youth stepped forward. Wilhelm scarcely could restrain a cry of wonder. "How?" exclaimed he: "Does our fair-haired knave, too, meet me here?" Friedrich looked attentively, and recognising Wilhelm, cried: "In truth it would not have so much astonished me to have beheld the famous Pyramids, which still stand fast in Egypt, or the grave of King Mausolus, which, as I am told, does not exist, here placed before me

in my uncle's garden, as to find you in it, my old friend, and frequent benefactor. Accept my best and heartiest service !”

After he had kissed and complimented all the circle, he again sprang towards Wilhelm, crying : “ Use him well, this hero, this leader of armies, and dramatical philosopher ? When we became acquainted first, I dressed his hair indifferently, execrably I may say ; yet afterwards he saved me from a pretty load of blows. He is magnanimous as Scipio, munificent as Alexander ; at times he is in love, yet he never hates his rivals. Far from heaping coals of fire upon the heads of his enemies, a piece of service, I am told, which we can do for any one, he rather, when his friends have carried off his love, despatches good and trusty servants after them, that they may not strike their feet against a stone.”

In the same style, he ran along with a volubility which baffled all attempts to restrain it ; and as no one could reply to him in that vein, he had the conversation mostly to himself. “ Do not wonder,” cried he, “ that I am so profoundly versed in sacred and profane writers : you shall hear by and by how I attained my learning.” They wished to know how matters stood with him, where he had been : but crowds of proverbs and old stories choked his explanation.

Natalia whispered to Theresa : “ His gayety afflicts me ; I am sure at heart he is not merry.”

As except a few jokes which Jarno answered, Friedrich's merriment was met by no response from those about him, he was forced at last to say : " Well there is nothing left for me, but among so many grave faces, to be grave myself. And as in such a solemn scene, the burden of my sins falls heavy on my soul, I must honestly resolve upon a general confession ; for which, however, you, my worthy gentlemen and ladies, shall not be a jot the wiser. This honourable friend already knows a little of my walk and conversation ; he alone shall know the rest ; and this the rather, as he alone has any cause to ask about it. Are not you," continued he to Wilhelm, " curious about the how and where, the when and wherefore ? And how it stands with the conjugation of the Greek verb φιλεω, φιλῶ, and the derivatives of that very amiable part of speech ?"

He then took Wilhelm by the arm, and led him off, pressing him and skipping round him with the liveliest air of kindness.

Scarcely had they entered Wilhelm's room, when Friedrich noticed, in the window, a powder-knife, with the inscription, *Think of me*. " You keep your valuables well laid up !" said he : " This is the powder-knife Philina gave you, when I pulled your locks for you. I hope, in looking at it, you have diligently thought of that fair damsel : I assure you, she has not forgotten you ; if I had not long ago obliterated every trace of jealousy

from my heart, I could not look on you without envy."

"Talk no more of that creature," answered Wilhelm. "I confess it was a while before I could get rid of the impression, which her looks and manner made on me; but that was all."

"Fy! Fy!" cried Friedrich: "Would any one deny his deary? You loved her as completely as a man could wish. No day passed without your giving her some present; and when a German gives, you may be sure he loves. No alternative remained for me but whisking her away from you; and in this the little red officer at last succeeded."

"How! You were the officer whom we discovered with her, whom she travelled off with?"

"Yes," said Friedrich, "whom you took for Mariana. We had sport enough at the mistake."

"What cruelty," cried Wilhelm, "to leave me in such suspense!"

"And besides to take the courier, whom you sent to catch us, into pay!" said Friedrich. "He is a very active fellow: we have kept him by us ever since. And the girl herself I love as desperately as ever. She has managed me in some peculiar style: I am almost in a mythologic case; every day I tremble at the thought of being metamorphosed."

"But tell me pray," said Wilhelm, "where have you acquired this stock of erudition? It surprises me to hear the strange way you have as-

sumed of speaking always with a reference to ancient histories and fables."

"It was by a pleasant plan," said Friedrich, "that I got my learning. Philina lives with me at present: we have got a lease of an old knightly castle from the farmer in whose ground it is: and there we live, with the hobgoblins of the place, as merrily as possible. In one of the rooms, we found a small but choice library, consisting of a *Bible* in folio, *Gottfried's Chronicle*, two volumes of the *Theatrum Europæum*, an *Acerra Philologica*, *Gryphius' Writings*, and some other less important works. As we now and then, when tired of romping, felt the time hang heavy on our hands, we proposed to read some books; and ere we were aware, the time hung heavier than before. At last Philina formed the royal plan of laying all the tomes, opened up at once, upon a large table: we sat down opposite to one another; we read to one another; always in detached passages, first from this book, then from that. Here was a proper pleasure! We thought we really were in good society, where it is reckoned wrong to dwell on any subject, or to search it to the bottom; we thought ourselves in witty gay society, where none will let his neighbour speak. We regularly treat ourselves with this diversion every day; and the erudition we obtain from it is quite surprising. Already there is nothing new for us under the sun; on every thing we see or hear, our learning

offers us a hint. This method of instruction we diversify in many ways. Frequently we read by an old spoiled sand-glass, which runs in a minute or two. The moment it is down, the silent party turns it round like lightning, and commences reading from his book; and no sooner is it down again, than the other cuts him short, and starts the former topic. Thus we study in a truly academic manner; only our hours are shorter, and our studies are extremely varied."

"This rioting is quite conceivable," said Wilhelm, "when a pair like you two are together: but how a pair so full of frolic stay together, does not seem so easily conceivable."

"It is our good fortune," answered Friedrich, "and our bad. Philina dare not let herself be seen, she cannot bear to see herself, she is in the family way. Nothing ever was so ludicrous and shapeless in the world. A little while before I came away, she chanced to cast an eye upon the looking-glass as she was passing. 'Faugh!' cried she, and turned away her face: 'the living picture of the Frau Melina! Shocking figure! One looks entirely deplorable!'"

"I confess," said Wilhelm with a smile, "it must be rather farcical to see a father and a mother such as you and her together."

"'Tis a foolish business," answered Friedrich, "that I must be raised at last to the paternal dignity. But she asserts, and the time agrees.

At first that cursed visit, which she paid you after Hamlet, gave me qualms."

"What visit?"

"I suppose you have not quite slept off the memory of it yet? The pretty, flesh-and-blood spirit of that night, if you do not know it, was Philina. The story was in truth a hard dower for me; but if we cannot be contented with such things, we should not be in love. Fatherhood at any rate depends entirely upon conviction: I am convinced, and so I am a father. There, you see, I can employ my logic in the proper season too. And if the brat do not laugh itself to death the instant it is born, it may prove, if not a useful, at least a pleasant citizen of this world."

Whilst our friends were talking thus of mirthful subjects, the rest of the party had begun a serious conversation. Scarcely were Friedrich and Wilhelm gone, when the Abbé led his friends as if by chance into a garden-house; and having got them seated, thus addressed them:

"We have in general terms asserted that Fräulein Theresa was not the daughter of her reputed mother: it is fit that we should now explain ourselves on this matter in detail. I shall relate the story to you, which I undertake to prove and to elucidate in every point.

"Frau von *** spent the first years of her wedlock in the utmost concord with her husband; only they had this misfortune, that the children

which she brought him came into the world dead ; and on occasion of the third, the mother was declared by the physicians to be on the verge of death, and to be sure of it, if she should ever have another. The parties were obliged to take their resolution : they would not break the marriage ; it was too suitable to both in a civil point of view. Frau von *** sought in the culture of her mind, in a certain habit of display, in the joys of vanity, a compensation for the happiness of motherhood which was refused her. She cheerfully indulged her husband, when she noticed in him an attachment to a young lady, who had sole charge of their domestic economy ; a person of beautiful exterior, and very solid character. Frau von *** herself, ere long, assisted in procuring an arrangement ; by which the lady yielded to the wishes of Theresa's father ; continuing to discharge her household duties, and testifying to the mistress of the family, if possible, a more submissive zeal to serve her than before.

“ After a while, she declared herself to be with child : and both the father and his wife, on this occasion, though from very different causes, fell upon the same idea. Herr von *** wished to have the offspring of his mistress educated in the house as his lawful child ; and Frau von ***, angry that the indiscretion of her Doctor had allowed some whisper of her state to go abroad, proposed by a supposititious child to counteract this : and

likewise to retain at home by this compliance, the superiority which, in other circumstances, she was like to lose. However, she was more backward than her husband : she observed his purpose ; and contrived without a formal question to facilitate his explanation. She made her own terms : obtaining almost every thing that she required ; and hence the will, in which so little care was taken of the child. The old Doctor was dead : they applied to a young active and discreet successor ; he was well rewarded ; he looked forward to the credit of exhibiting and remedying the unskilfulness and premature decision of his deceased colleague. The true mother not unwillingly consented ; they managed the deception very well ; Theresa came into the world, and was surrendered to a step-mother, while her mother fell a victim to the plot ; having died by venturing out too early, and left the father inconsolable.

“ Frau von *** had thus attained her object ; in the eyes of the world she had a lovely child, which she paraded with excessive vanity ; and she had also been delivered from a rival, whose fortune she was envying, and whose influence, at least in prospect, she beheld with apprehension. The infant she loaded with her tenderness ; and by affecting, in trustful hours, a lively feeling for her husband’s loss, she gained the mastery of his heart ; so that in a manner he surrendered all to her ; laid his own happiness and that of his child

in her hands ; nor was it till a short while prior to his death, and in some degree by the exertions of his grown-up daughter, that he again assumed the rule in his own house. This, fair Theresa, was in all probability the secret, which your father in his last sickness wanted to disclose to you ; this is what I wished to lay before you circumstantially, at a moment when our young friend, who, by a strange concurrence, has become your bridegroom, happens to be absent. Here are the papers, which will prove in the most rigorous manner every thing that I have stated. You will also see from them how long I have been following the trace of this discovery, although till now I never could attain to certainty respecting it. I did not risk imparting to my friend the possibility of such a happiness ; it would have wounded him too deeply, had this hope a second time deceived him. You will understand poor Lydia's suspicions : I readily confess, I nowise favoured the attachment of our friend to her, whenever I began to look for a connexion with Theresa."

To this recital none replied. The ladies, some days afterwards, returned the papers, not making any farther mention of them.

There were other matters in abundance to engage the party when they were together ; and the scenery around was so delightful, that our friends, singly or in company, on horseback, in carriages or on foot, delighted to explore it. On one of

these excursions, Jarno took an opportunity of opening the affair to Wilhelm: he delivered him the papers; not, however, seeming to require from him any resolution in regard to them.

“In the singular position I am placed in,” said our friend, “I need only repeat to you what I said at first, in presence of Natalia, and with the full intention to fulfil it. Lothario and his friends may require of me every sort of self-denial: I here abandon in their favour all pretension to Theresa; do you procure me, for it, a discharge in form. There needs no great reflection to decide. For some days, I have noticed that Theresa has to make an effort in retaining even a show of the vivacity with which she welcomed me at first. Her affection is gone from me, or rather I have never had it.”

“Such affairs are more conveniently explained,” said Jarno, “by a gradual process, in silence and expectation, than by many words, which always cause a sort of fermentation and embarrassment.”

“I rather think,” said Wilhelm, “that precisely this affair admits of the most clear and calm decision on the spot. I have often been reproached with hesitation and uncertainty: why will you now, when I do not hesitate, commit against me the fault which you have often blamed in me? Do our neighbours take such trouble with our training, only to let us feel that they themselves are untrained? Yes, grant me soon the cheerful thought that

I am out of a mistaken project, into which I entered with the purest feelings in the world."

Notwithstanding this request, some days elapsed without his hearing any more of the affair, or observing any farther alteration in his friends. The conversation on the contrary was general and of indifferent matters.

CHAPTER VII.

JARNO and Wilhelm were sitting one day by Natalia. "You are thoughtful, Jarno," said the lady; "I have seen it in your looks for some time."

"I am so," answered Jarno: "a weighty business is before me, which we have for years been meditating, and must now begin to execute. You already know the outline of it: I may speak of it before our friend; for it will depend upon himself, whether he shall share in it or not. Ere long you are going to get rid of me: I mean to take a voyage to America."

"To America?" said Wilhelm smiling: "Such an adventure I was not anticipating from you; still less that you would have selected me for a companion."

"When you rightly understand our plan," said Jarno, "you will give it a more honourable name; and perhaps yourself be tempted to embark in it. Listen to me. It requires but a slight acquaintance with the business of the world to see that mighty changes are at hand, that property is almost nowhere quite secure."

“Of the business of the world I have no clear notion,” interrupted Wilhelm; and it is but lately that I ever thought about my property. Perhaps I had done well to drive it from my head still longer; the care for its security appears to give us hypochondria.”

“Hear me out,” said Jarno: “Care beseems ripe age, that youth may live for a time free from care: in the conduct of poor mortals, equilibrium cannot be restored except by contrarieties. At present it is any thing but prudent to have property in only one place, to commit your money to a single spot; and it is difficult again to guide it properly in many. We have therefore thought of something else. From our old tower there is a society to issue, which must spread itself through every quarter of the world; and to which members from every quarter of the world shall be admissible. We shall insure a competent subsistence to each other, in the single case of a revolution happening, which may drive any part of us entirely from their possessions. I am now proceeding to America, to profit by the good connexions which our friend established while he staid there. The Abbé means to go to Russia: if you like to join us, you shall have the choice of continuing in Germany to help Lothario, or of accompanying me. I conjecture you will choose the latter: to take a distant journey is extremely serviceable to a young man”

Wilhelm thought a moment, and replied : “ The offer well deserves consideration ; for ere long the word with me must be, The farther off the better. You will let me know your plan, I hope, more perfectly. It is perhaps my ignorance of life that makes me think so ; but such a combination seems to me to be attended with insuperable difficulties.”

“ The most of which, till now, have been avoided,” answered Jarno, “ by the circumstance, that we have been but few in number, honourable, discreet, determined people, animated by a certain general feeling, out of which alone the feeling proper for societies can spring.”—“ And if you speak me fair,” said Friedrich, who hitherto had only listened, “ I too will go along with you.”

Jarno shook his head.

“ Well, what objections can you make?” cried Friedrich. “ In a new colony, young colonists will be required ; these I bring with me : merry colonists will also be required ; of these I make you certain. Besides, I recollect a certain damsel, who is out of place on this side of the water, the fair, soft-hearted Lydia. What is the poor thing to do with her sorrow and mourning, unless she get an opportunity to throw it to the bottom of the sea, unless some brave fellow take her by the hand ? You, my benefactor,” said he, turning towards Wilhelm, “ have a taste for comforting forsaken persons : what withholds you now ? Each

of us might take his girl beneath his arm, and trudge with Jarno."

This proposal was by no means gratifying to our friend. He answered with affected calmness: "I know not whether she is unengaged; and as in general I seem to be unfortunate in courtship, I shall hardly think of making the attempt."

"Brother Friedrich," said Natalia, "though thy own conduct is so full of levity, it does not follow that such sentiments will answer others. Our friend deserves a heart that shall belong to him alone, that shall not at his side be moved by foreign recollections. It was only with a character as pure and reasonable as Theresa's, that such a venture could be risked."

"Risk!" cried Friedrich: "In love it is all risk. In the grove or at the altar, with a clasp of the arms or a golden ring, by the chirping of the cricket or the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums, it is all but a risk; chance does it all."

"I have often noticed," said Natalia, "that our principles are just a supplement to our peculiar manner of existence. We delight to clothe our errors in the garb of universal laws; to attribute them to irresistibly-appointed causes. Do but think, by what a path thy dear will lead thee, now that she has drawn thee towards her, and holds thee fast so strongly."

"She herself is on a very pretty path," said Friedrich, "on the path to saintship. A by-path,

it is true, and somewhat round about; but the pleasanter and surer for that. Maria of Magdala travelled it, and who can say how many more. But on the whole, sister, when the point in hand is love, thou shouldst not mingle in it. In my opinion, thou wilt never marry, till a bride is lacking somewhere; in that case, thou wilt give thyself, with thy habitual charity, to be the supplement of some peculiar manner of existence; not otherwise. So let us strike a bargain with this soul-broker, and agree about our travelling company."

"You come too late with your proposals," answered Jarno; "Lydia is disposed of."

"And how?" cried Friedrich.

"I myself have offered her my hand," said Jarno.

"Old gentleman," said Friedrich, "you have done a feat to which, if we regard it as a substantive, various adjectives might be appended; various predicates, if we regard it as a subject."

"I must honestly confess," replied Natalia, "it appears a dangerous experiment to make a help-mate of a woman, at the very moment when her love for another man is like to drive her to despair."

"I have ventured," answered Jarno; "under a certain stipulation, she is to be mine. And, believe me, there is nothing in the world more precious than a heart susceptible of love and passion."

Whether it has loved, whether it still loves, are points which I regard not. The love, of which another is the object, charms me almost more than that which is directed to myself. I see the strength, the force of a tender soul, and my self-love does not trouble the delightful vision."

"Have you talked with Lydia, then, of late?" inquired Natalia.

Jarno smiled and nodded: Natalia shook her head, and said as he arose: "I really know not what to make of you; but me you shall not mystify, I promise you."

She was about retiring, when the Abbé entered with a letter in his hand. "Stay, if you please," said he to her; "I have a proposal here, respecting which your counsel will be welcome. The Marchese, your late uncle's friend, whom for some time we have been expecting, will be here in a day or two. He writes to me, that German is not so familiar to him as he had supposed; that he needs a person who possesses this and other languages to travel with him; that as he wishes to connect himself with scientific rather than political society, he cannot do without some such interpreter. I can think of no one better suited for the post, than our young friend here. He knows the language; is acquainted with many things beside; and for himself, it cannot but be advantageous to travel over Germany in such society and such circumstances. Till we have seen our native country, we have no

scale to judge of other countries by. What say you, my friend? What say you, Natalia?"

Nobody objected to the scheme: Jarno seemed to think his Transatlantic project would not be a hindrance, as he did not mean to sail directly. Natalia did not speak; and Friedrich uttered various saws about the uses of travel.

This new project so provoked our friend, that he could scarce conceal his irritation. He saw, in this proposal, a concerted plan for getting rid of him as soon as possible; and what was worse, they went so openly to work, and seemed so utterly regardless of his feelings. The suspicions Lydia had excited in him, all that he himself had witnessed, rose again upon his mind; the simple manner in which every thing had been explained by Jarno, now appeared to him another piece of artifice.

He constrained himself, and answered: "At all events, the offer will require mature deliberation."

"A quick decision may perhaps be necessary," said the Abbé.

"For that I am not ready," answered Wilhelm. "We can wait till the Marchese comes, and then observe if we agree together. One condition must, however, be conceded first of all; that I take Felix with me."

"This is a condition," said the Abbé, "which will scarcely be conceded."

“ And I do not see,” cried Wilhelm, “ why I should let any man prescribe conditions to me ; or why, if I choose to view my native country, I must go in company with an Italian.”

“ Because a young man,” said the Abbé, with a certain imposing earnestness, “ is always called upon to form connexions.”

Wilhelm, feeling that he could not long retain his self-command, as it was Natalia's presence only which in some degree assuaged his indignation, hastily made answer : “ Give me a little while to think. I imagine it will not be very hard to settle, whether I am called upon to form additional connexions ; or ordered irresistibly, by heart and head, to free myself from such a multiplicity of bonds, which seem to threaten me with a perpetual, miserable thralldom.”

Thus he spoke, with a deeply-agitated mind. A glance at Natalia somewhat calmed him : her form and dignity, in this impassioned moment, stamped themselves more deeply on his mind than ever.

“ Yes,” said he, so soon as he was by himself, “ confess it, thou lovest her ; thou once more feelest what it means to love with all thy soul. Thus did I love Mariana, and deceive myself so dreadfully ; I loved Philina, and could not help despising her. Aurelia I respected, and could not love : Theresa I revered, and paternal tenderness assumed the form of an affection for her. And now when all the feelings, which can

make a mortal happy, meet within my heart, now am I compelled to fly! Ah! why should these feelings and convictions be combined with an insuperable longing? Why, without the hope of its fulfilment, should they utterly subvert all other happiness? Shall the sun and the world, society or any other gift of fortune, ever henceforth yield me pleasure? Shalt thou not forever say: Natalia is not here! And yet, alas, Natalia will be always present to thee! If thou closest thy eyes, she will appear to thee; if thou openest them, her form will flit before all outward things, like the image which a dazzling object leaves behind it in the eye. Did not the swiftly-passing figure of the Amazon dwell continually in thy imagination? And yet thou hadst but seen her, thou didst not know her. Now when thou knowest her, when thou hast been so long beside her, when she has shown such care about thee; now are her qualities impressed as deeply on thy soul, as her form was then upon thy fancy. It is painful to be always seeking; but far more painful to have found, and to be forced to leave. What now shall I ask for farther in the world? What now shall I look for farther? Is there a country, a city that contains a treasure such as this? And I must travel on, and ever find inferiority? Is life then like a race-course, where a man must rapidly return, when he has reached the utmost end? Does the

good, the excellent stand before us like a firm un-moving goal, from which with fleet horses we are forced away, the instant we appeared to have attained it? Happier are they who strive for earthly wares ! They find what they are seeking in its proper climate, or they buy it in the fair.

“ Come, my own boy !” cried he to Felix, who now ran frisking towards him : “ be thou, and remain thou, all to me ! Thou wert given me as a compensation for thy much-loved mother ; thou wert to replace the second mother whom I meant for thee ; and now thou hast a loss still greater to make good. Occupy my heart, occupy my spirit with thy beauty, thy loveliness, thy capabilities, and thy desire to use them !”

The boy was busied with a new plaything ; his father tried to put it in a better state for him ; just as he succeeded, Felix lost all pleasure in it. “ Thou art a true son of Adam !” cried Wilhelm : “ Come, my child ! Come, my brother ! let us wander, playing without object, through the world, as best we may.”

His resolution to remove, to take the boy along with him, and recreate his mind by looking at the world, had now assumed a settled form. He wrote to Werner for the necessary cash and letters of credit ; sending Friedrich’s courier on the message, with the strictest charges to return immediately. Much as the conduct of his other friends

had grieved him, his relation to Natalia remained serene and clear as ever.

He confided to her his intention : she took it as a settled thing that he would go ; and if this seeming carelessness in her chagrined him, her kindly manner and her presence made him calm. She counselled him to visit various towns, that he might get acquainted with certain of her friends. The courier returned, and brought the letter which our friend required, though Werner did not seem content with this new whim. “ My hope that thou wert growing reasonable,” so the letter ran, “ is now again deferred. Where are you all gadding ? And where lingers the lady, who, thou saidst, was to assist us in arranging these affairs ? Thy other friends are also absent : they have thrown the whole concern upon the shoulders of the Lawyer and myself. Happy that he is as expert a jurist, as I am a financier ; and that both of us are used to business. Fare thee well ! Thy aberrations shall be pardoned thee ; since but for them, our situation here could not have been so favourable.”

So far as outward matters were concerned, our friend might now have entered on his journey ; but there were still two hindrances that held his mind. In the first place, they flatly refused to show him Mignon’s body, till the funeral the Abbè meant to celebrate ; and for this solemnity, the preparations were not ready. There had also been a curious letter

from the country Clergyman, in consequence of which the Doctor had gone off. It related to the Harper; of whose fate Wilhelm wanted to have farther information.

In these circumstances, day or night he found no rest for mind or body. When all were asleep, he used to wander up and down the house. The presence of the pictures and statues, which he knew so well of old, alternately attracted and repelled him. Nothing that surrounded him could he lay hold of or let go; all things remembered him of all; the whole ring of his existence lay before him; but it was broken into fragments, and seemed as if it never would unite. These works of art, which his father had sold, appeared to him an omen that he himself was destined never to obtain a lasting calm possession of any thing desirable in life, or always to be robbed of it so soon as gained, by his own or other people's blame. He waded so deeply in these strange and dreary meditations, that frequently he almost thought himself a disembodied spirit; and even when he felt and handled things without him, he could scarcely keep himself from doubting whether he was really there and living.

Nothing but the piercing grief, which often seized him, but the tears he shed at being forced, by causes frivolous as they were irresistible, to leave the good which he had found, and found after having lost it, restored him to

the feeling of his earthly life. It was in vain to call before his mind his happy state in other points of view. "All is nothing then," exclaimed he, "if the one blessing, which appears to us worth all the rest, is wanting!"

The Abbé told the company that the Marchese was arrived. "You have determined, it appears," said he to Wilhelm, "to set out upon your travels with your boy alone: get acquainted with this nobleman, however; he will be useful to you, if you meet him by the way." The Marchese entered: he was a person not yet very far advanced in years; a fine, handsome, pleasing, Lombard figure. In his youth, while in the army and afterwards in public business, he had known Lothario's uncle: they had subsequently travelled through the greater part of Italy together; and many of the works of art, which the Marchese now again fell in with, had been purchased in his presence, and under various happy circumstances, which he still distinctly recollected.

The Italians have in general a deeper failing for the higher dignity of art than any other nation. In Italy, whoever follows the employment, tries to pass at once for artist, master, and professor: by which pretensions, he acknowledges at least that it is not sufficient merely to lay hold of some transmitted excellency, or to acquire by practice some dexterity; but that a man who aims at art, should have the power to think of what he does, to lay

down principles, and make apparent to himself and others, how and wherefore he proceeds in this way or in that.

The stranger was affected at again beholding these productions, when the owner of them was no more ; and cheered to see the spirit of his friend surviving in the gifted persons left behind him. They discussed a series of works ; they found a lively satisfaction in the harmony of their ideas. The Marchese and the Abbé were the speakers ; Natalia felt herself again transported to the presence of her uncle, and could enter without difficulty into their opinions and criticisms ; Wilhelm could not understand them, except as he translated their technology into dramatic language. Freidrich's facetious vein was sometimes rather difficult to keep in check. Jarno was seldom there.

It being observed that excellent works of art were very rare in latter times, it was remarked by the Marchese : " We can hardly think or estimate how many circumstances must combine in favour of the artist : with the greatest genius, with the most decisive talent, the demands which he must make upon himself are infinite, the diligence required in cultivating his endowments is unspeakable. Now, if circumstances are not in his favour ; if he notice that the world is very easy to be satisfied, requiring but a slight, pleasing, transitory show ; it were matter of surprise, if insolence and selfishness did not keep him fixed at

mediocrity ; it were strange if he did not rather think of bartering modish wares for gold and praises, than of entering on the proper path, which could not fail in some degree to lead him to a sort of painful martyrdom. Accordingly, the artists of our time are always offering and never giving. They always aim at charming, and they never satisfy ; every thing is merely indicated ; you can nowhere find foundation or completion. Those for whom they labour, it is true, are little better. If you wait a while in any gallery of pictures, and observe what works attract the many, what are praised and what neglected, you have little pleasure in the present, little hope in the future."

" Yes," replied the Abbé ; " and thus it is that artists and their judges mutually form each other. The latter ask for nothing but a general vague enjoyment, a work of art is to delight them almost as a work of nature ; they imagine that the organs for enjoying works of art may be cultivated altogether of themselves, like the tongue and the palate ; they try a picture or a poem as they do an article of food. They do not understand how very different a species of culture it requires to raise one to the true enjoyment of art. The hardest part of it, in my opinion, is that sort of separation, which a man that aims at perfect culture must accomplish in himself. It is on this account, that we observe so many people partially culti-

vated ; and yet every one of them attempting to pronounce upon the general whole."

"Your last remark is not quite clear to me," said Jarno, who came in just then.

"It would be difficult," replied the Abbé, "to explain it to you fully without a long detail. Thus much I may say : When any man pretends to mix in manifold activity or manifold enjoyment, he must also be enabled as it were to make his organs manifold and independent of each other. Whoever aims at doing or enjoying all and every thing with his entire nature ; whoever tries to link together all that is without him by such a species of enjoyment, will only lose his time in efforts that can never be successful. How difficult, although it seems so easy, is it to contemplate a noble disposition, a fine picture simply in and for itself ; to watch the music for the music's sake ; to admire the actor in the actor ; to take pleasure in a building for its own peculiar harmony and durability. Most men are wont to treat a work of art, though fixed and done, as if it were a piece of soft clay. The hard and polished marble is again to mould itself, the firm-walled edifice is to contract or to expand itself, according as their inclinations, sentiments, and whims may dictate ; the picture is to be instructive, the play to make us better, every thing is to do all. The reason is that most men are themselves unformed, they cannot give themselves and their being any certain

shape; and thus they strive to take from other things their proper shape, that all they have to do with may be loose and wavering like themselves. Every thing is in the long run reduced by them to what they call effect, every thing is relative, they say; and so indeed it is; every thing with them grows relative, except absurdity and tastelessness, which govern with a sway as absolute as need be."

"I understand you," answered Jarno; "or rather I perceive how what you have been saying follows from the principles which you maintain so firmly. Yet with men, poor devils, we should not go to quest so strictly. I know enow of them in truth, who, beside the greatest works of art and nature, forthwith recollect their own most paltry insufficiency; who take their conscience and their morals with them to the opera; who bethink them of their loves and hatreds in contemplating a colonnade. The best and greatest that can be presented to them from without, they must first, as far as possible, diminish in their way of representing it, that they may in any measure be enabled to combine it with their own sorry nature."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Abbé called them in the evening to attend the exequies of Mignon. The company proceeded to the Hall of the Past; they found it magnificently ornamented and illuminated. The walls were hung with azure tapestry almost from the ceiling to the floor, so that nothing but the cornices and friezes above and below were visible. On the four candilabras in the corners, large wax-lights were burning; smaller lights were in the four smaller candilabras placed by the sarcophagus in the middle. Near this stood four Boys, dressed in azure with silver; they had broad fans of ostrich feathers, which they waved above a figure that was resting upon the sarcophagus. The company sat down: two invisible Choruses began in a soft musical recitative to ask: "Whom bring ye us to the still dwelling?" The four Boys replied with lovely voices: "'Tis a tired playmate whom we bring you; let her rest in your still dwelling, till the songs of her heavenly sisters once more awaken her."

CHORUS.

“ Firstling of youth in our circle, we welcome thee ! With sadness welcome thee ! May no boy, no maiden follow ! Let age only, willing and composed, approach the silent Hall, and in the solemn company, repose this one dear child !

Boys.

Ah ! reluctantly we brought her hither ! Ah ! and she is to remain here ! Let us too remain ; let us weep, let us weep upon her bier !

CHORUS.

Yet look at the strong wings ; look at the light clear robe ! How glitters the golden band upon her head ! Look at the beautiful, the noble repose !

Boys.

Ah ! the wings do not raise her ; in the frolic game, her robe flutters to and fro no more ; when we bound her head with roses, her looks on us were kind and friendly.

CHORUS.

Cast forward the eyes of your spirits ! Awake in your souls the imaginative power, which carries Life, the fairest, the highest of earthly endowments, away beyond the stars.

Boys.

But ah ! We find her not here ; in the garden she wanders not ; the flowers of the meadow she plucks no longer. Let us weep, we are leaving her here ! Let us weep and remain with her !

CHORUS.

Children, turn back into life ! Your tears let the fresh air dry which plays upon the rushing water. Fly from Night ! Day and Pleasure and Continuance are the lot of the living.

Boys.

Up ! Turn back into life ! Let the day give us labour and pleasure, till the evening brings us rest, and the nightly sleep refreshes us.

CHORUS.

Children ! Hasten into life ! In the pure garments of beauty, may Love meet you with heavenly looks and with the wreath of immortality !

The Boys had retired ; the Abbé rose from his seat, and went behind the bier. “ It is the appointment,” said he, “ of the Man who prepared this silent abode, that each new tenant of it shall be introduced with a solemnity. After him, the builder of this mansion, the founder of this establishment ; we have next brought a young stranger hither ; and thus already does this little space

contain two altogether different victims of the rigorous, arbitrary, and inexorable goddess of Death. By appointed laws we enter into life; the days are numbered, which make us ripe to see the light; but for the duration of our life there is no law. The weakest thread will spin itself to unexpected length; and the strongest is cut suddenly asunder by the scissors of the Fates, delighting, as it seems, in contradictions. Of the child, whom we have here committed to her final rest, we can say but little. It is still uncertain whence she came; her parents we know not; the years of her life we can only conjecture. Her deep and closely shrouded soul allowed us scarce to guess at its interior movements; there was nothing clear in her, nothing open but her affection for the man, who had snatched her from the hands of a barbarian. This impassioned tenderness, this vivid gratitude, appeared to be the flame which consumed the oil of her life: the skill of the physician could not save that fair life, the most anxious friendship could not lengthen it. But if art could not stay the departing spirit, it has done its utmost to preserve the body, and withdraw it from decay. A balsamic substance has been forced through all the veins, and now tinges, in the place of blood, these cheeks too early faded. Come near, my friends, and view this wonder of art and care!"

He raised the veil: the child was lying in her angel's-dress, as if asleep, in the most soft and

graceful posture. They approached it, and admired this show of life. Wilhelm alone continued sitting in his place; he was not able to compose himself: what he felt, he durst not think; and every thought seemed ready to destroy his feeling.

For the sake of the Marchese, the speech had been pronounced in French. That nobleman came forward with the rest, and viewed the figure with attention. The Abbé thus proceeded. "With a holy confidence, this kind heart, shut up to men, was continually turned to its God. Humility, nay an inclination to abase herself externally, seemed natural to her. She claved with zeal to the catholic religion, in which she had been born and educated. Often she expressed a still wish to sleep on consecrated ground: and according to the usage of the church we have therefore consecrated this marble coffin, and the little earth which is hidden in the cushion that supports her head. With what ardour did she in her last moments kiss the image of the Crucified, which stood beautifully figured, on her tender arm, with many hundred points!" So saying, he stripped up her right sleeve; and a crucifix, with marks and letters round it, showed itself in blue upon the white skin.

The Marchese looked at this with eagerness, stooping down to view it more intensely. "O God!" cried he, as he stood upright, and raised his hands to Heaven: "Poor child! Unhappy

niece ! Do I meet thee here ! What a painful joy to find thee, whom we had long lost hope of ; to find this dear frame, which we had long believed the prey of fishes in the ocean, here preserved, though lifeless ! I assist at thy funeral, splendid in its external circumstances, still more splendid from the noble persons who attend thee to thy place of rest. And to these," added he with a faltering voice, " so soon as I can speak, I will express my thanks."

Tears hindered him from saying more. By the pressure of a spring, the Abbé sank the body into the cavity of the marble. Four Youths, dressed as the Boys had been, came out from behind the tapestry ; and lifting the heavy, beautifully ornamented lid upon the coffin, thus began their song.

THE YOUTHS.

" Well is the treasure now laid up ; the fair image of the Past ! Here sleeps it in the marble, undecaying ; in your hearts too it lives, it works. Travel, travel back into life ! Take along with you this holy Earnestness : for Earnestness alone makes life eternity."

The invisible Chorus joined in with the last words : but no one heard the strengthening sentiment ; all were too much busied with themselves, and the emotions which these wonderful disclosures had excited. The Abbé and Natalia

conducted the Marchese out; Theresa and Lothario walked by Wilhelm. It was not till the music had altogether died away, that their sorrows, thoughts, meditations, curiosity again fell on them with all their force, and made them long to be transported back into that exalting scene.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Marchese avoided speaking of the matter ; but had long, secret conversations with the Abbé. When the company was met, he often asked for music ; a request to which they willingly assented, as each was glad to be delivered from the charge of talking. Thus they lived for some time, till it was observed that he was making preparations for departure. One day he said to Wilhelm : “ I wish not to disturb the remains of this beloved child ; let her rest in the place where she loved and suffered : but her friends must promise to visit me in her native country, in the scene where she was born and bred ; they must see the turrets and statues, of which a dim idea remained with her. I will lead you to the bays, where she liked so well to roam and gather pebbles. You, at least, young man, shall not escape the gratitude of a family that stands so deeply indebted to you. To-morrow I set out on my journey. The Abbé is acquainted with the whole history of this matter : he will tell it you again. He could pardon me when grief interrupted my recital ; as a third party he will be enabled to narrate the incidents

with more connexion. If, as the Abbé had proposed, you like to follow me in travelling over Germany, you shall be heartily welcome. Leave not your boy behind : at every little inconvenience which he causes us, we will again remember your attentive care of my poor niece."

The same evening, our party was surprised by the arrival of the Countess. Wilhelm trembled in every joint as she entered : she herself, though forewarned, kept close by her sister, who speedily reached her a chair. How singularly simple was her attire, how altered was her form ! Wilhelm scarcely dared to look at her : she saluted him with a kindly air ; a few general words addressed to him did not conceal her sentiments and feelings. The Marchese had retired betimes ; and as the company were not disposed to part so early, the Abbé now produced a manuscript. " The singular narrative which was intrusted to me," said he, " I forthwith put on paper. The case where pen and ink should least of all be spared, is in recording the particular circumstances of remarkable events." They informed the Countess of the matter ; and the Abbé read as follows, in the name of the Marchese :

" Many men as I have seen, I still regard my father as a very extraordinary person. His character was noble and upright ; his ideas were enlarged, I may even say great ; to himself he was severe ; in all his plans there was a rigid order, in

all his operations an unbroken perseverance. In one sense, therefore, it was easy to transact and live with him: yet owing to the very qualities which made it so, he never could accommodate himself to life; for he required from the state, from his neighbours, from his children, and his servants, the observance of all the laws which he had laid upon himself. His most moderate demands became exorbitant by his rigour; and he never could attain to enjoyment, for nothing ever was completed as he had forecast it. At the moment when he was erecting a palace, laying out a garden, or acquiring a large estate in the highest cultivation, I have seen him inwardly convinced, with the sternest ire, that Fate had doomed him to do nothing but abstain and suffer. In his exterior, he maintained the greatest dignity; if he jested, it was but displaying the preponderancy of his understanding. Censure was intolerable to him: the only time I ever saw him quite transported with rage, was once when he heard that one of his establishments was spoken of as something ludicrous. In the same spirit, he had settled the disposal of his children and his fortune. My eldest brother was educated as a person that had large estates to look for. I was to embrace the clerical profession; the youngest was to be a soldier. I was of a lively temper; fiery, active, quick, apt for all corporeal exercises: the youngest rather seemed inclined to an enthusiastic quiet-

ism; devoted to the sciences, to music, and poetry. It was not till after the hardest struggle, the maturest conviction of the impossibility of his project, that our father, still reluctantly, agreed to let us change vocations; and although he saw us both contented, he could never suit himself to this arrangement, but declared that nothing good would come of it. The older he grew, the more isolated did he feel himself from all society. At last he came to live almost entirely alone. One old friend, who had served in the German armies, who had lost his wife in the campaign, and brought a daughter of about ten years of age along with him, remained his only visitor. This person bought a fine little property beside us: he used to come and see my father on stated days of the week, and at stated hours; his little daughter often came along with him. He was never heard to contradict my father, who at length grew perfectly habituated to him, and endured him as the only tolerable company he had. After our father's death, we easily observed that this old gentleman had not been visiting for nought, that his compliances had been rewarded by an ample settlement. He enlarged his estates; his daughter might expect a handsome portion. The girl grew up, and was extremely beautiful: my elder brother often joked with me about her, saying I should go and court her.

“ Meanwhile brother Augustin, in the seclusion

of his cloister, had been spending his years in the strangest state of mind. He abandoned himself wholly to the feeling of a holy enthusiasm, to those half-spiritual, half-physical emotions, which, as they for a time exalted him to the third heaven, ere long sank him down to an abyss of powerlessness and vacant misery. While my father lived, no change could be contemplated; what indeed could we have asked for or proposed? After the old man's death, our brother visited us frequently: his situation, which at first afflicted us, in time grew much more tolerable; for his reason had at length prevailed. But the more confidently reason promised him complete recovery and contentment on the pure path of nature, the more vehemently did he require of us to free him from his vows. His thoughts, he let us know, were turned upon Sperata, our fair neighbour.

“ My elder brother had experienced too much suffering from the harshness of our father, to look on the condition of the youngest without sympathy. We spoke with the family confessor, a worthy old man; we signified to him the double purpose of our brother, and requested him to introduce and expedite the business. Contrary to custom, he delayed: and at last, when Augustin pressed us, and we recommended the affair more keenly to the clergyman, he had nothing left but to impart the strange secret to us.

“ Sperata was our sister, and that by both her

parents. Our mother had declared herself with child, at a time when both she and our father were advanced in years : a similar occurrence had shortly before been made the subject of some merriment in our neighbourhood ; and our father, to avoid such ridicule, determined to conceal this late lawful fruit of love as carefully as people commonly conceal its earlier accidental fruits. Our mother was delivered secretly ; the child was carried to the country : and the old friend of the family, who, with the confessor, had alone been trusted with the secret, easily engaged to give her out for his daughter. The confessor had reserved the right of disclosing the secret in case of extremity. The supposed father was now dead ; Sperata was living with an old lady ; we were aware that a love of song and music had already led our brother to her ; and on his again requiring us to loose his former bond, that he might form a new one, it was necessary that we should, as soon as possible, apprise him of the danger which he stood in.

“ He viewed us with a wild contemptuous look. ‘ Spare your idle tales,’ cried he, ‘ for children and credulous fools ; from me, from my heart, they shall not tear Sperata ; she is mine. Recall, I pray you, instantly, your frightful spectre, which would but harass me in vain. Sperata is not my sister ; she is my wife !’ He described to us, in rapturous terms, how this heavenly creature had drawn him out of his unnatural state of separation

from his fellow-creatures into true life ; how their spirits accorded like their voices ; how he blessed his sufferings and errors, since they had kept clear of women, till the moment when he wholly and forever gave himself to this most amiable being. We were shocked at the discovery, we deplored his situation, but we knew not how to help ourselves, for he declared with violence, that Sperata had a child by him within her bosom. Our confessor did whatever duty could suggest to him, but by this means he only made the evil worse. The relations of nature and religion, moral rights, and civil laws, were vehemently attacked and spurned at by our brother. He considered nothing holy but his relation to Sperata ; nothing dignified but the names of father and wife. ‘ These alone,’ cried he, ‘ are suitable to nature ; all else is caprice and opinion. Were there not noble nations, which admitted marriage with a sister ? Name not your gods ! You never name them but when you wish to befool us, to lead us from the paths of nature, and, by scandalous constraint, to transform the noblest inclinations into crimes. Unbreakable are the perplexities, abominable the abuse, into which you force the victims whom you bury alive.

‘ I may speak, for I have suffered like no other ; from the highest, sweetest feeling of enthusiasm, to the frightful deserts of utter weakness, vacancy, annihilation, and despair ; from the

loftiest aspirations of preternatural existence, to the most entire unbelief, unbelief in myself. All these horrid grounds of the cup, so flattering at the brim, I have drained; and my whole being was poisoned to its core. And now, when kind nature, by her greatest gift, by love, has healed me; now, when in the arms of a heavenly creature, I again feel that I am, that she is, that out of this living union a third shall arise and smile in our faces; now ye open up the flames of your Hell, of your Purgatory, which can only singe a sick imagination; ye oppose them to the vivid, true, indestructible enjoyment of pure love! Meet us under these cypresses, which turn their solemn tops to heaven; visit us among those espaliers where the citrons and pomegranates bloom beside us, where the graceful myrtle stretches out its tender flowers to us; and then venture to disturb us with your weak, dreary, paltry nets which men have spun!

“ Thus for a long time he persisted in a stubborn disbelief of our story; and when we assured him of its truth, when the confessor himself asseverated it, he did not let it drive him from his point. ‘ Ask not the echoes of your cloisters, not your mouldering parchments, not your narrow whims and ordinances! Ask nature and your heart; she will teach you what you should recoil from; she will point out to you with the strictest finger, over what she has pronounced her everlasting curse. Look at the lilies: do not husband and wife shoot

forth on the same stalk? Does not the flower, which bore them, hold them both? And is not the lily the type of innocence; is not their sisterly union fruitful? When nature abhors, she speaks it aloud; the creature that shall not be is not produced; the creature that lives with a false life is soon destroyed. Unfruitfulness, painful existence, early destruction, these are her curses, the marks of her displeasure. It is only by immediate consequences that she punishes. Look around you; and what is prohibited, what is accursed, will force itself upon your notice. In the silence of the convent, in the tumult of the world, a thousand practices are consecrated and revered, while her curse rests on them. On stagnant idleness as on overstrained toil, on caprice and superfluity as on constraint and want, she looks down with mournful eyes: her call is to moderation; true are all her commandments, peaceful all her influences. The man who has suffered as I have done has a right to be free. *Sperata* is mine; death alone shall take her from me. How I shall retain her, how I may be happy, these are your cares! This instant I go to her, and part from her no more.'

"He was for proceeding to the boat, and crossing over to her: we restrained him, entreating that he would not take a step, which might produce the most tremendous consequences. He should recollect, we told him, that he was not living in the free

world of his own thoughts and ideas ; but in a constitution of affairs, whose ordinances and relations had become inflexible as laws of nature. The confessor made us promise not to let him leave our sight, still less our house : after this he went away, engaging to return ere long. What we had foreseen took place : reason had made our brother strong, but his heart was weak ; the earlier impressions of religion rose on him, and dreadful doubts along with them. He passed two fearful nights and days : the confessor came again to his assistance, but in vain ! His enfranchised understanding acquitted him ; his feelings, religion, all his usual ideas declared him guilty.

“ One morning, we found his chamber empty : on the table lay a note, in which he signified that, as we kept him prisoner by force, he felt himself entitled to provide for his freedom ; that he meant to go directly to Sperata, he expected to escape with her, and was prepared for the most terrible extremities, should any separation be attempted.

“ The news of course affrighted us exceedingly : but the confessor bade us be at rest. Our poor brother had been narrowly enough observed : the boatman, in place of taking him across, proceeded with him to his cloister. Fatigued with watching for the space of four-and-twenty hours, he fell asleep, as the skiff began to rock him in the moonshine ; and he did not awake, till he saw himself in

the hands of his spiritual brethren ; he did not recover from his amazement, till he heard the doors of the convent bolting behind him.

“ Sharply touched at the fate of our brother, we reproached the confessor for his cruelty ; but he soon silenced or convinced us by the surgeon’s reason, that our pity was destructive to the patient. He let us know that he was not acting on his own authority, but by order of the bishop and his chapter ; that by this proceeding, they intended to avoid all public scandal, and to shroud the sad occurrence under the veil of a secret course of discipline prescribed by the Church. Our sister they would spare ; she was not to be told that her lover was her brother. The charge of her was given to a priest, to whom she had before disclosed her situation. They contrived to hide her pregnancy and her delivery. As a mother she felt altogether happy in her little one. Like the most of our women, she could neither write, nor read writing : she gave the priest many verbal messages to carry to her lover. The latter, thinking that he owed this pious fraud to a suckling mother, often brought pretended tidings from our brother, whom he never saw ; recommending her, in his name, to be at peace ; begging of her to be careful of herself and of her child ; and for the rest to trust in God.

“ Sperata was inclined by nature to religious feelings. Her situation, her solitude increased this

tendency ; the clergyman encouraged it, in order to prepare her by degrees for an eternal separation. Scarcely was her child weaned, scarcely did he think her body strong enough for suffering agony of mind, when he began to paint her fault to her in most terrific colours, to treat the crime of being connected with a priest as a sort of sin against nature, as a sort of incest. For he had taken up the strange thought of making her repentance equal in intensity to what it would have been, had she known the true circumstances of her error. By this, he brought so much anxiety and sorrow on her mind ; he so exalted the idea of the Church and of its head before her ; showed her the awful consequences, for the weal of all men's souls, should indulgence in a case like this be granted, and the guilty pair rewarded by a lawful union ; signifying too how wholesome it was to expiate such sins in time, and thereby gain the crown of immortality,—that at last, like a poor criminal, she willingly held out her neck to the axe, and earnestly entreated that she might forever be divided from our brother. Having gained so much, the clergy left her liberty, (reserving to themselves a certain distant oversight,) to live at one time in a convent, at another in her house, according as she afterwards thought good.

“ Her little girl meanwhile was growing: from her earliest years, she had displayed an extraordinary disposition. When still very young, she

could run, and move with wonderful dexterity ; she sang beautifully, and learned to play upon the cithern almost of herself. With words, however, she could not express herself ; and the impediment seemed rather to proceed from her mode of thought, than from her organs of speech. The feelings of the poor mother to her, in the mean time, were of the most painful kind : the expostulations of the priest had so perplexed her mind, that though she was not quite deranged, her state was far from being sane. She daily thought her crime more terrible and punishable ; the clergyman's comparison of incest, frequently repeated, had impressed itself so deeply, that her horror was not less than if the actual circumstances had been known to her. The priest took no small credit for his ingenuity, by which he had contrived to tear a luckless creature's heart asunder. It was miserable to behold maternal love, ready to expand itself in joy at the existence of her child, contending with the horrid feeling that this child should not be there. The two emotions strove together in her soul ; love was often weaker than aversion.

“ The child had long ago been taken from her, and committed to a worthy family residing on the sea-shore. In the greater freedom, which the little creature here enjoyed, she soon displayed her singular delight in climbing. To mount the highest peaks, to run along the edges of the ships,

to imitate in all their strangest feats the rope-dancers, whom she often saw in the place, appeared with her a natural tendency.

“ To practise this with greater ease, she liked to change clothes with boys: and although her foster parents thought this highly blameable and unbecoming, we caused her be indulged as much as possible. Her wild walks and leapings often led her to a distance; she would lose her way, and be long from home, but she always came again. In general, as she returned, she used to set herself beneath the columns in the portal of a country house in the neighbourhood: her people now had ceased to look for her; they waited for her. She would there lie resting on the steps; then run up and down the large hall, looking at the statues; after which, if nothing specially detained her, she used to hasten home.

“ But at last our confidence was balked, and our indulgence punished. The child went out, and did not come again: her little hat was found swimming on the water, near the spot where a torrent rushes down into the sea. It was conjectured that, in clambering among the rocks, her foot had slipped: all our searching could not find the body. >

“ The thoughtless tattle of her house-mates soon communicated the occurrence to Sperata: she seemed calm and cheerful when she heard it; hinting not obscurely at her satisfaction that God

had pleased to take her poor child to himself, and thus preserved it from suffering or causing some more dreadful misery.

“ On this occasion, all the fables which are told about our waters came to be the common talk. The sea, it was said, required every year an innocent child : yet it would endure no corpse, but sooner or later throw it to the shore ; nay the last joint, though sunk to the lowest bottom, must again come forth. They told the story of a mother, inconsolable because her child had perished in the sea, who prayed to God and his saints to grant her at least the bones for burial. The first storm threw ashore the skull, the next the spine ; and after all was gathered, she wrapped the bones in a cloth, and took them to the church : but O ! miraculous to tell ! as she crossed the threshold of the temple, the packet grew heavier and heavier, and at last, when she laid it on the steps of the altar, the child began to cry, and issued living from the cloth. One joint of the right hand little finger was alone wanting : this too the mother anxiously sought and found ; and in memory of the event it was preserved among the other relics of the church.

“ On poor Sperata these recitals made a deep impression : her imagination took a new flight, and favoured the emotion of her heart. She supposed that now the child had expiated, by its death, its own sins, and the sins of its parents ; that the

curse and penalty, which hitherto had overhung them all, was at length wholly removed ; that nothing more was necessary, could she only find the child's bones, that she might carry them to Rome, where, upon the steps of the great altar in St Peter's, her little girl, again covered with its fair fresh skin, would stand up alive before the people. With its own eyes, it would once more look on father and mother ; and the Pope, convinced that God and his saints commanded it, would, amid the acclamations of the people, remit the parents their sins, acquit them of their oaths, and join their hands in wedlock.

“ Her looks and her anxiety were henceforth constantly directed to the sea and the beach. When at nights in the moonshine, the waves were tossing to and fro, she thought each glittering sheet of foam was bringing out her child ; and some one near her must pretend to run away to take it up when it should reach the shore.

“ By day she walked unweariedly along the places where the pebbly beach shelved slowly to the water : she gathered, in a little basket, all the bones which she could find. None durst tell her that they were the bones of animals : the larger ones she buried ; the little ones she took along with her. In this employment she incessantly persisted. The clergyman, who, by so unremittingly discharging what he thought his duty, had reduced her into this condition, now stood up for

her with all his strength. By his influence, the people in the neighbourhood were made to look upon her not as a distracted person, but as one entranced : they stood in reverent attitudes, as she walked by, and the children ran to kiss her hand.

“ To the old woman, her attendant and faithful friend, the secret of Sperata’s guilt was at length imparted by the priest, on her solemnly engaging to watch over the unhappy creature with untiring care, through all her life. And she kept this engagement to the last, with admirable conscientiousness and patience.

“ Meanwhile we had always had an eye upon our brother. Neither the physicians nor the clergy of his convent would allow us to be seen by him ; but, in order to convince us of his being well in some sort, we had leave to look at him as often as we liked, in the garden, the passages, or even through a window in the roof of his apartment.

“ After many terrible and singular changes, which I shall omit, he had passed into a strange state of mental rest and bodily unrest. He never sat but when he took his harp and played upon it, and then he usually accompanied it with singing. At other times, he kept continually in motion ; and in all things he was grown extremely guideable and pliant, for all his passions seemed to have resolved themselves into the single fear of death. You could persuade him to do any thing by threatening him with dangerous sickness or with death.

“ Besides this singularity of walking constantly about the cloister, a practice which he hinted it were better to exchange for wandering over hill and dale, he talked about an Apparition which perpetually tormented him. He declared, that on awakening, at whatever hour of the night, he saw a beautiful boy standing at the foot of his bed, with a bare knife, and threatening to destroy him. They shifted him to various other chambers of the convent; but he still asserted that the boy pursued him. His wandering to and fro in consequence grew more and more unrestful; the people afterwards remembered, that at this time they had often seen him standing at the window looking out upon the sea.

“ Our poor sister, on the other hand, seemed gradually wasting under the consuming influence of her single thought, of her narrow occupation. It was at last proposed by the physician, that among the bones which she had gathered, the fragments of a child's skeleton should by degrees be introduced; and so the hapless mother's hopes kept up. The experiment was dubious; but this at least seemed likely to be gained by it, that when all the parts were got together, she would cease her weary search, and might be entertained with hopes of going to Rome.

“ It was accordingly resolved on: her attendant changed, by imperceptible degrees, the small remains committed to her with the bones Sperata

found. An inconceivable delight arose in the poor sick woman's heart, when the parts began to fit each other, and the shape of those still wanting could be marked. She had fastened every fragment in its proper place with threads and ribbons; filling up the vacant spaces with embroidery and silk, as is usually done with the relics of saints.

“ In this way nearly all the bones had been collected; none but a few of the extremities were wanting. One morning, while she was asleep, the physician having come to ask for her, the old attendant, with a view to show him how his patient occupied herself, took away these dear remains from the little chest where they lay in poor Sperrata's bedroom. A few minutes afterwards, they heard her spring upon the floor; she lifted up the cloth and found the chest empty. She threw herself upon her knee; they came and listened to her joyful ardent prayer. ‘ Yes!’ exclaimed she, ‘ it is true; it was no dream, it is real! Rejoice with me, my friends! I have seen my own beautiful good little girl again alive. She arose and threw the veil from off her; her splendour enlightened all the room; her beauty was transfigured to celestial loveliness; she could not tread the ground, although she wished it. Lightly was she borne aloft; she had not even time to stretch her hand to me. *There!*’ cried she to me, and pointed to the road where I am soon to go. Yes, I will follow her, soon follow her; my heart is light to think

of it. My sorrows are already vanished ; the sight of my risen little one has given me a foretaste of the joys of heaven.'

" From that time, her soul was wholly occupied with prospects of the brightest kind ; she gave no farther heed to any earthly object ; she took but little food ; her spirit by degrees cast off the fetters of the body. At last this imperceptible gradation reached its head unexpectedly : her attendants found her pale and motionless ; she opened not her eyes ; she was what we call dead.

" The report of her vision quickly spread abroad among the people ; and the reverential feeling, which she had excited in her lifetime, soon changed, at her death, to the thought that she should be regarded as in bliss, nay, as in sanctity.

" When we were bearing her to be interred, a crowd of persons pressed with boundless violence about the bier ; they would touch her hand, they would touch her garment. In this impassioned elevation, various sick persons ceased to feel the pains by which at other times they were tormented : they looked upon themselves as healed ; they declared it, they praised God and his new saint. The clergy were obliged to lay the body in a neighbouring chapel ; the people called for opportunity to offer their devotion. The concourse was incredible ; the mountaineers, at all times prone to lively and religious feelings, crowded forward from their valleys ; the reverence, the wonder, the adoration

daily spread and gathered strength. The ordinances of the bishop, which were meant to limit, and in time abolish this new worship, could not be put in execution: every show of opposition raised the people into tumults; every unbeliever they were ready to assail with personal violence. ‘Did not Saint Borromæus,’ cried they, ‘dwell among our forefathers? Did not his mother live to taste the joy of his canonization? Was not that great figure on the rocks at Arona meant to represent to us, by a sensible symbol, his spiritual greatness? Do not the descendants of his kindred live among us to this hour? And has not God promised ever to renew his miracles among a people that believe?’

“As the body, after several days, exhibited no marks of putrefaction, but grew whiter, and as it were translucent, the general faith rose higher and higher. Among the multitude, were several cures, which even the sceptical observer was unable to account for, or ascribe entirely to fraud. The whole country was in motion: those who did not go to see it, heard at least no other topic talked of.

“The convent, where my brother lived, resounded, like the land at large, with the noise of these wonders; and the people felt the less restraint in speaking of them in his presence, as in general he seemed to pay no heed to any thing, and

his connexion with the circumstance was known to none of them. But on this occasion it appeared that he had listened with attention. He conducted his escape with such dexterity and cunning, that the manner of it still remains a mystery. We learned afterwards, that he had crossed the water with a number of travellers; and charged the boatmen, who observed no other singularity about him, above all to have a care lest their vessel overset. Late in the night, he reached the chapel, where his hapless love was resting from her woes. Only a few devotees were kneeling in the corners of the place; her old friend was sitting at the head of the corpse; he walked up to her, saluted her, and asked how her mistress was. 'You see it,' answered she with some embarrassment. He looked at the corpse with a sidelong glance. After some delay he took its hand. Frightened by its coldness, he in the instant let it go: he looked unrestfully around him; then turning to the old attendant: 'I cannot stay with her at present,' said he; 'I have a long, long way to travel; but at the proper time I will be back: tell her so when she awakes.'

"With this he went away. It was a while before we got intelligence of these occurrences: we searched; but all our efforts to discover him were vain. How he worked his way across the mountains, none can say. A long time after he was gone, we came upon a trace of him among the

Grisons ; but we were too late ; it quickly vanished. We supposed that he was gone to Germany ; but his weak foot-prints had been speedily obliterated by the war."

CHAPTER X.

THE Abbé ceased to read: no one had listened without tears. The Countess scarcely ever took her handkerchief from her eyes; at last she rose, and, with Natalia, left the room. The rest were silent, till the Abbé thus began: "The question now arises, whether we shall let the good Marchese leave us without telling him our secret. For who can doubt a moment, that our Harper and his brother Augustin are one? Let us consider what is to be done; both for the sake of that unhappy man himself, and of his family. My advice is not to hurry, but to wait till we have heard what news the Doctor, who is gone to see him, brings us back."

All were of the same opinion; and the Abbé thus proceeded: "Another question, which perhaps may be disposed of sooner, still remains. The Marchese is affected to the bottom of his heart, at the kindness which his poor niece experienced here, particularly from our young friend. He made me tell him, and repeat to him every circumstance connected with her; and he showed the liveliest gratitude on hearing it. 'Her young

benefactor,' he said, 'refused to travel with me, while he knew not the connexion that subsists between us. I am not now a stranger, of whose manner of existence, of whose humours he might be uncertain: I am his associate, his relation; and as his unwillingness to leave his boy behind was the impediment which kept him from accompanying me, let this child now become a fairer bond to join us still more closely. Besides the services which I already owe him, let him be of service to me on my present journey; let him then return along with me; my elder brother will receive him as he ought. And let him not despise the heritage of his unhappy foster-child: for by a secret stipulation of our father with his military friend, the fortune which he gave Sperata has returned to us: and certainly we will not cheat our niece's benefactor of the recompense which he has merited so well.' "

Theresa, taking Wilhelm by the hand, now said to him: "We have here another beautiful example that disinterested well-doing yields the highest and best return. Follow the call, which comes to you so strangely: and while you lay a double load of gratitude on the Marchese, hasten to a fair land, which has already often drawn your heart and your imagination towards it."

"I leave myself entirely to the guidance of my friends and you," said Wilhelm: "it is vain to think, in this world, of adhering to our individual

will. What I purposed to hold fast, I must let go; and benefits, which I have not deserved, descend upon me of their own accord."

With a gentle pressure of Theresa's hand, Wilhelm took his own away. "I give you full permission," said he to the Abbé, "to decide about me as you please. Since I shall not need to leave my Felix, I am ready to go anywhere, and to undertake whatever you think good."

Thus authorised, the Abbé formed his plan immediately. The Marchese, he proposed, should be allowed to go; Wilhelm was to wait for tidings from the Doctor; he might then, when they had settled what was to be done, set off with Felix. Under the pretence, accordingly, that Wilhelm's preparations for his journey would detain him, he advised the stranger to employ the meanwhile in examining the curiosities of the city, which he meant to visit. The Marchese did in consequence depart; and not without renewed and strong expressions of his gratitude; of which indeed the presents left by him, including jewels, precious stones, embroidered stuffs, afforded a sufficient proof.

Wilhelm was at length himself in readiness for travelling; and his friends began to be distressed because the Doctor did not send them any news of his proceedings. They feared some mischief had befallen the poor old Harper, at the very moment when they were in hopes of fundament-

ally improving his condition. They sent the Courier off; but he was scarcely gone, when the Doctor in the evening entered with a stranger, whose form and aspect were expressive, earnest, striking, and whom no one knew. Both stood silent for a space; the stranger at length went up to Wilhelm, and holding out his hand, said: "Do you not know your old friend then?" It was the Harper's voice; but of his form there seemed no vestige to remain. He was in the common garb of a traveller, cleanly and genteelly dressed; his beard had vanished; his hair was dressed with some attention to the mode; and what particularly made him quite irrecongnisable was, that in his countenance the look of age was no longer to be seen. Wilhelm embraced him with the liveliest joy: he was presented to the rest; and behaved himself with great propriety, not knowing that the party had a little while before become so well acquainted with him. "You will have patience with a man," continued he with great composure, "who, grown up as he appears, is entering on the world, after long sorrows, inexperienced as a child. To this skilful gentleman, I stand indebted for the privilege of again appearing in the company of my fellow-men."

They bade him welcome: the Doctor motioned for a walk, to interrupt the conversation, and lead it to indifferent topics.

In private the Doctor gave the following ex-

planation: "It was by the strangest chance that we succeeded in the cure of this man. We had long treated him, morally and physically, as our best consideration dictated: in some degree the plan was efficacious; but the fear of death continued powerful in him, and he would not lay aside his beard and cloak. For the rest, however, he appeared to take more interest in external things than formerly; and both his songs and his conceptions seemed to be approaching nearer life. A strange letter from the Clergyman, you know already, called me from you. I arrived; I found our patient altogether changed; he had voluntarily given up his beard; he had let his locks be cut into a customary form; he asked for common clothes; he seemed to have at once become another man. Though curious to penetrate the reason of this sudden alteration, we did not risk inquiring of himself: at last we accidentally discovered it. A glass of laudanum was missing from the Parson's private laboratory: we thought it right to institute a strict inquiry on the subject; every one endeavoured to ward off suspicion; and the sharpest quarrels rose among the inmates of the house. At last this man appeared before us and admitted that he had the laudanum: we asked if he had swallowed any of it. 'No!' said he: 'but it is to this that I owe the recovery of my reason. It is at your choice to take the vial from me; and to drive me back inevitably to my former

state. The feeling that it was desirable to see the pains of life terminated by death first put me on the way of cure ; ere long the thought of terminating them by voluntary death arose in me ; and with this intention, I took the glass of poison. The possibility of casting off my load of griefs for ever gave me strength to bear them : and thus have I, ever since this talisman came into my possession, pressed myself back into life, by a contiguity with death. Be not anxious lest I use the drug ; but resolve as men acquainted with the human heart, by granting me an independence on life, to make me properly and wholesomely dependent on it.' After a mature consideration of the matter, we determined not to meddle farther with him : and he now carries with him, in a firm, little ground-glass vial, this poison, of which he has so strangely made an antidote."

The Doctor was informed of all that had transpired since his departure ; towards Augustin, it was determined, that they should observe the deepest silence in regard to it. The Abbé undertook to keep beside him, and to lead him forward on the healthful path which he had entered.

Meanwhile Wilhelm was to set about his journey over Germany with the Marchese. If it should appear that Augustin could be again excited to affection for his native country, the circumstances were to be communicated to his friends, and Wilhelm might conduct him thither.

Wilhelm had at last made every preparation for his journey. At first the Abbé thought it strange that Augustin rejoiced in hearing of his friend and benefactor's purpose to depart; but he soon discovered the foundation of this curious movement. Augustin could not subdue his fear of Felix; and he longed as soon as possible to see the boy removed.

By degrees so many people had assembled, that the Castle and adjoining buildings scarcely could accommodate them all; and the less, as such a multitude of guests had not originally been anticipated. They breakfasted, they dined together; each endeavoured to persuade himself that they were living in a comfortable harmony, but each in secret longed in some degree to be away. Theresa frequently rode out attended by Lothario, and oftener alone: she had already got acquainted with all the landladies and landlords in the district; for she held it as a principle of her economy, in which perhaps she was not far mistaken, that it was essential to be in the best acceptance with one's neighbours male and female, and to maintain with them a constant interchange of civilities. Of an intended marriage with Lothario, she appeared to have no thought. Natalia and the Countess often talked with one another; the Abbé seemed to covet the society of Augustin; Jarno had frequent conversations with the Doctor; Friedrich held by Wilhelm; Felix ran about, wherever he could

meet with most amusement. It was thus too that in general they paired themselves in walking, when the company broke up: when it was obliged to be together, recourse was quickly had to music, to unite them all by giving each back to himself.

Unexpectedly the Count increased the party; intending to remove his lady, and, as it appeared, to take a solemn farewell of his worldly friends. Jarno hastened to the coach to meet him: the Count inquired what guests they had; to which the other answered, in a fit of wild humour, that would often seize him: "We have all the nobility on earth; Marcheses, Marquises, Mylords and Barons: we wanted nothing but a Count." They came up stairs; Wilhelm was the first who met them in the antechamber. "Milord," said the Count to him in French, after looking at him for a moment, "I rejoice very much in the unexpected pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with your Lordship: I am very much mistaken, if I did not see you at my Castle in the Prince's suite." "I had the happiness of waiting on your Excellence at that time," answered Wilhelm; "but you do me too much honour when you take me for an Englishman, and that of the first quality. I am a German, and"—"A very brave young fellow," interrupted Jarno. The Count looked at Wilhelm with a smile, and was going to make some reply, when the rest of the party entered, and saluted him with many a friendly welcome. They excused

themselves for being unable at the moment to show him to a proper chamber ; promising without delay to make the necessary room for him.

“ Aye, aye !” said he smiling : “ We have left to chance, I see, to act as our purveyor. Yet with prudence and arrangement, how many things are possible ! For the present, I entreat you not to stir a slipper from its place ; the disorder, I perceive, is great enough already. Every one would be uncomfortably quartered ; and this no one shall be on my account, if possible, not even for an hour. You can testify,” said he to Jarno, “ and you too, Meister,” turning round to Wilhelm, “ what a crowd of people I commodiously bestowed at one time in my Castle. Let me have the list of persons and servants ; let me see how they are lodged at present : I will make a plan of dislocation, such that, with the very smallest inconvenience, every one shall find a suitable apartment, and there shall be room enough to hold another guest if one should accidentally arrive.”

Jarno volunteered to be the Count’s assistant ; procured him all the necessary information ; taking great delight, as he was wont, if now and then he could succeed in leading him astray and leaving him in awkward difficulties. The old gentleman at last, however, gained a signal triumph. The arrangement was completed ; he caused the names to be written on their several doors, himself attending ; and it could not be denied that by a

very few changes and substitutions, the object had been fully gained. Jarno, among other things, had also managed that the persons, who at present took an interest in each other, should be lodged together.

“ Will you help me,” said the Count to Jarno, after every thing was settled, “ to clear up my recollections of the young man there, whom you call Meister, and who, you tell me, is a German ?” Jarno was silent ; for he knew very well that the Count was one of those people, who in asking questions merely wish to show their knowledge. The Count, accordingly, continued without waiting for an answer : “ You, I recollect, presented him to me ; and warmly recommended him in the name of the Prince. If his mother was a German woman, I’ll be bound for it his father is an Englishman, and one of rank too : who can calculate the English blood, which has been flowing for the last thirty years, in German veins ! I do not wish to pump you : I know you have always family secrets of the kind ; but in cases such as this, it is vain to think of cheating me.” He then proceeded to detail a great variety of things as having taken place with Wilhelm at the Castle ; to the whole of which Jarno, as before, kept silence ; though the Count was altogether in the wrong, confounding Wilhelm more than once with a young Englishman of the Prince’s suite. The truth was, the good old gentleman had in former

years possessed a very excellent memory ; and was still proud of being able to remember the minutest circumstances of his youth : but in regard to late occurrences, he used to settle in his mind as true and utter with the greatest certainty, whatever fables and fantastic combinations in the growing weakness of his powers, imagination might present to him. For the rest, he was become extremely mild and courteous ; his presence had a very favourable influence upon the company. He would call on them to read some useful book together ; nay he often gave them little games, which, without participating in them, he directed with the greatest care. On their wondering at his condescension, he replied, that it became a man, who differed from the world in weighty matters, to conform to it more anxiously on that account in matters of indifference.

In these games, our friend had more than once an angry and unquiet feeling to endure. Friedrich, with his usual levity, took frequent opportunity of giving hints that Wilhelm entertained a lurking passion for Natalia. How could he have found it out ? What entitled him to say so ? And would his friends not think that, as the two were frequently together, Wilhelm must have made to him so thoughtless and unlucky a disclosure ?

One day while they were merrier than common, at some joke of this description, Augustin, dashing up the door, rushed in with a frightful look ; his

countenance was pale, his eyes were wild ; he seemed about to speak, but his tongue refused its office. The party were astounded ; Lothario and Jarno, supposing that his madness had returned, sprang up and seized him. With a choked and faltering voice, then loudly and violently, he spoke and cried : " Not me ! Haste ! Help ! Save the child ! Felix is poisoned ! "

" They let him go ; he hastened through the door ; all followed him in consternation. They called the Doctor : Augustin made for the Abbé's chamber ; they found the child ; who seemed amazed and frightened, when they called to him from a distance : " What hast thou been doing ? "

" Dear papa ! " cried Felix, " I did not drink from the bottle, I drank from the glass : I was very thirsty. "

Augustin struck his hands together : " He is lost ! " cried he ; then pressed through the bystanders, and hastened away.

They found a glass of almond-milk upon the table, with a bottle near it more than half empty. The Doctor came ; was told what they had seen and heard : with horror he observed the well-known laudanum-vial lying empty on the table. He called for vinegar, he summoned all his art to his assistance.

Natalia had the little patient taken to a room, she busied herself with painful care about him. The Abbé had run out to seek for Augustin, and

draw some explanation from him. The unhappy father had been out upon the same endeavour, but in vain : he returned, to find anxiety and fear on every face. The Doctor, in the mean time, had been examining the almond-milk in the glass ; he found it to contain a powerful mixture of opium : the child was lying on the sofa, seeming very sick ; he begged his father ‘ not to let them pour more stuff into him, not to let them plague him any more.’ Lothario had sent out his people, and had ridden off himself, endeavouring to find some trace of Augustin. Natalia sat beside the child : he took refuge in her bosom, and entreated earnestly for her protection ; earnestly for a little piece of sugar ; the vinegar, he said, was biting sour. The Doctor granted his request ; the child was in a frightful agitation ; they were forced to let him have a moment’s rest. The Doctor said that every mean had been adopted : he would do his utmost. The Count came near with an appearance of displeasure ; his look was earnest, even solemn : he laid his hands upon the child ; turned his eyes to Heaven, and remained some moments in that attitude. Wilhelm, who was lying inconsolable upon a seat, sprang up, and casting a despairing look upon Natalia, left the room. Shortly afterwards the Count too left it.

“ I cannot understand,” said the Doctor, having paused a little ; “ how it comes that there is not the smallest trace of danger visible about the

child. At a single gulp, he must have swallowed an immense dose of opium; yet I find no movement in his pulse, but what may be ascribed to our remedies, and to the terror we have put him into."

In a few minutes Jarno entered with intelligence that Augustin had been discovered in the upper story, lying in his blood; a razor had been found beside him; to all appearance he had cut his throat. The Doctor hastened out: he met the people carrying down the body. The unhappy man was laid upon a bed, and accurately examined: the cut had gone across the windpipe; a copious loss of blood had been succeeded by a swoon; yet it was easy to observe that life, that hope was still there. The Doctor put the body in a proper posture; joined the edges of the wound, and bandaged it. The night passed sleepless and full of care to all. Felix would not quit Natalia: Wilhelm sat before her on a stool; he had the boy's feet upon his lap; the head and breast were lying upon hers. Thus did they divide the pleasing burden and the painful anxiety; and continue, till the day broke, in their uncomfortable sad position. Natalia had given her hand to Wilhelm; they did not speak a word; they looked at the child and then at one another. Lothario and Jarno were sitting at the other end of the room, and carrying on a most important conversation; which, did not the pressure of events forbid us, we

would gladly lay before our readers. The boy slept softly ; he awoke quite cheerful, early in the morning, and demanded a piece of bread and butter.

So soon as Augustin had in some degree recovered, they endeavoured to obtain some explanation from him. They learned with difficulty, and by slow degrees, that having, by the Count's unlucky shifting, been appointed to the same chamber with the Abbé, he had found the manuscript in which his story was recorded. Struck with horror on perusing it, he felt convinced that it was now impossible for him to live ; on which he had recourse as usual to the laudanum : this he poured into a glass of almond-milk, and raised it to his mouth ; but he shuddered when it reached his lips ; he set it down untasted ; went out to walk once more across the garden, and behold the face of nature ; and on his return, he found the child employed in filling up the glass out of which it had been drinking.

They entreated the unhappy creature to be calm ; he seized Wilhelm by the hand with a spasmodic grasp, and cried : " Ah ! why did I not leave thee long ago ? I knew well that I would kill the boy, and he me." " The boy lives !" said Wilhelm. The Doctor, who had listened with attention, now inquired of Augustin if all the drink was poisoned. " No," replied he, " nothing but the glass." " By the luckiest chance, then,"

cried the Doctor, "the boy has drunk from the bottle! A benignant Genius has guided his hand, that he did not catch at death, which stood so near and ready for him." "No! No!" cried Wilhelm with a groan, and clapping both his hands upon his eyes: "How dreadful are the words! Felix said expressly that he drank not from the bottle but the glass. His health is but a show; he will die among our hands." Wilhelm hastened out; the Doctor went below, and taking Felix up, with much caressing, asked: "Now did not you, my pretty boy? You drank from the bottle, not the glass?" The child began to cry. The Doctor secretly informed Natalia how the matter stood: she also strove in vain to get the truth from Felix, who but cried the more; cried until he fell asleep.

Wilhelm watched by him; the night went peacefully away. Next morning Augustin was found lying dead in bed: he had cheated his attendants by a seeming rest; had silently loosed off the bandages, and bled to death. Natalia went to walk with Felix: he was sportful as in his happiest days. "You are always good to me;" said Felix; "you never scold, you never beat me; I will tell the truth to you, I did drink from the bottle. Mamma Aurelia used to rap me over the fingers every time I touched the bottle: father looked so sour, I thought he meant to beat me."

With winged steps Natalia hastened to the Castle; Wilhelm came, still overwhelmed with care,

them into awkward difficulties, by the liberty he took to think aloud.

In the sickness of his friend he seemed to have no faith whatever. Once when they were all together, "Pray Doctor," cried he, "how is it you call the malady our friend is labouring under? Will none of the three thousand names, with which you decorate your ignorance, apply to it? The disease at least is not without examples. There is one such case," continued he with an emphatic tone, "in the Egyptian or Babylonian history."

The company looked at one another, and smiled.

"What call you the king—?" cried he, and stopped short a moment. "Well, if you will not help me, I must help myself." He threw the door-leaves up, and pointed to the large picture in the antechamber. "What call you the goat-beard there, with the crown on, who is standing at the foot of the bed, making such a rueful face about his sick son? How call you the beauty, who enters, and in her modest roguish eyes at once brings poison and antidote? How call you the quack of a doctor, who at this moment catches a glimpse of the reality, and for the first time in his life takes occasion to prescribe a reasonable recipe, to give a drug which cures to the very heart, and is at once salutiferous and savoury?"

In this manner he continued babbling. The

company took it with as good a face as might be ; hiding their embarrassment behind a forced laugh. A slight blush overspread Natalia's cheeks, and betrayed the movements of her heart. By good fortune, she was walking up and down with Jarno : on coming to the door, with a cunning motion she slipped out, walked once or twice across the antechamber, and retired to her room.

The company were silent : Friedrich began to dance and sing :

“ O ye shall wonders see !
What has been is not to be ;
What is said is not to say,
Before the break of day
Ye shall wonders see !”

Theresa had gone out to find Natalia ; Friedrich pulled the Doctor forward to the picture ; pronounced a ridiculous eulogium on medicine, and glided from the room.

Lothario had been standing all the while in the recess of a window ; he was looking, without motion, down into the garden. Wilhelm was in the most dreadful state. Left alone with his friends, he still kept silence for a time : he ran with a hurried glance over all his history, and at last, with shuddering, surveyed his present situation : he started up and cried : “ If I am to blame for what is happening, for what you and I are suf-

fering, punish me. In addition to my other miseries, deprive me of your friendship, and let me wander, without comfort, forth into the wide world, in which I should have mingled and withdrawn myself from notice long ago. But if you see in me the victim of a cruel entanglement of chance, out of which I could not thread my way, then give me the assurance of your love, of your friendship, on a journey which I dare not now postpone. A time will come, when I may tell you what has passed of late within me. Perhaps this is but a punishment, which I am suffering, because I did not soon enough disclose myself to you, because I hesitated to display myself entirely as I was: you would have assisted me, you would have helped me out in proper season. Again and again have my eyes been opened to my conduct; but it was ever too late, it was ever in vain! How richly do I merit Jarno's censure! I imagined I had seized it; how firmly did I purpose to employ it, to commence another life! Could I, might I have done so? It avails not for mortals to complain of Fate or of themselves! We are wretched, and appointed for wretchedness; and what does it matter whether blame of ours, higher influence or chance, virtue or vice, wisdom or folly plunge us into ruin? Farewell! I will not stay another moment in a house, where I have so fearfully violated the rights of hospitality. Your brother's indiscretion is unpardonable; it aggravates my suf-

fering to the highest pitch, it drives me to despair."

"And what," replied Lothario, taking Wilhelm by the hand, "what if your alliance with my sister were the secret article on which depended my alliance with Theresa? This amends that noble maiden has appointed for you: she has vowed that these two pairs should appear together at the altar. 'His reason has made choice of me,' said she; 'his heart demands Natalia: my reason shall assist his heart.' We agreed to keep our eyes upon Natalia and yourself; we told the Abbé of our plan, who made us promise not to intermeddle with this union, or attempt to forward it, but to suffer every thing to take its course. We have done so, Nature has performed her part; our mad brother only shook the ripe fruit from the branch. And now, since we have come together so unusually, let us lead no common life; let us work together in a noble manner and for noble purposes! It is inconceivable how much a man of true culture can accomplish for himself and others, if, without attempting to rule, he can be the guardian over many; can induce them to do that in season, which they are at any rate disposed enough to do; can guide them to their objects, which in general they see with due distinctness, though they miss the road to them. Let us make a league for this: it is no enthusiasm; but an idea which may be fully executed, which indeed is often executed,

only with imperfect consciousness, by people of benevolence and worth. Natalia is a living instance of it. No other need attempt to rival the plan of conduct which has been prescribed by nature for this pure and noble soul."

He had more to say, but Friedrich with a shout came jumping in. "What a garland have I earned!" cried he: "how will you reward me? Myrtle, laurel, ivy, leaves of oak, the freshest you can find, come twist them: I have merits far beyond them all. Natalia is thine! I am the conjurer who raised this treasure for thee."

"He raves," said Wilhelm; "I must go."

"Art thou empowered to speak?" inquired Lothario, holding Wilhelm from retiring.

"By my own authority," said Friedrich, "and the grace of God. It was thus I was the wooer; thus I am the messenger: I listened at the door; she told the Abbé every thing."

"Barefaced rogue! who bade thee listen?" said Lothario.

"Who bade her bolt the door?" cried Friedrich. "I heard it all: she was in a wondrous pucker. In the night when Felix seemed so ill, and was lying half upon her knees, and thou wert sitting comfortless before her, sharing the beloved load, she made a vow, that if the child should die, she would confess her love to thee, and offer thee her hand. And now when the child lives, why should she change her mind? What we promise under

such conditions, we keep under any. Nothing wanting but the parson ! He will come, and marvel what strange news he brings."

The Abbé entered. " We know it all," cried Friedrich : " be as brief as possible ; it is mere formality you come for ; they never send for you or me on any other score."

" He has listened," said the Baron. " Scandalous !" exclaimed the Abbé.

" Now, quick !" said Friedrich. " How stands it with the ceremonies ? These we can reckon on our fingers. You must travel ; the Marchese's invitation answers to a hairsbreadth. If we had you once beyond the Alps, it will all be right : the people are obliged to you for undertaking any thing surprising ; you procure them an amusement which they are not called to pay for. It is as if you gave a free ball ; all ranks partake in it."

" In such popular festivities," replied the Abbé, " you have done the public much effectual service in your time ; but to-day, it seems, you will not let me speak at all."

" If it is not just as I have told it," answered Friedrich, " let us have it better. Come round, come round ; we must see them both together."

Lothario embraced his friend, and led him to Natalia, who with Theresa came to meet them. All were silent.

" No loitering !" cried Friedrich. " In two

days you may be ready for your travels. Now, think you, friend," continued he, addressing Wilhelm, "when we scraped acquaintance first, and I asked you for the pretty nosegay, who could have supposed that you were ever to receive a flower like this from me?"

"Do not, at the moment of my highest happiness, remind me of those times!"

"Of which you need not be ashamed, any more than one need be ashamed of his descent. The times were very good times: only I must laugh to look at thee; to my mind, thou resemblest Saul the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom."

"I know not the worth of a kingdom," answered Wilhelm; "but I know I have attained a happiness; which I have not deserved, and which I would not change with any thing in life."

THE END.

